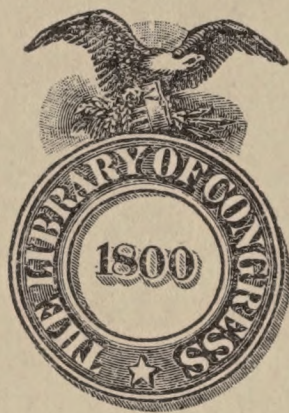


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BENVENUTA

A ROMANCE OF THE
HUDSON RIVER

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A ROMANCE OF THE
HUDSON RIVER

BY
ADELE SARPY MORRISON



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THE THOMPSON COMPANY

1914

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REVENUE

A ROMANCE OF THE
HUDSON RIVER

BY
ADELE SARPY MORRISON

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DEDICATORY

IF IT WERE ONLY POSSIBLE TO ENTWINE YOUR IDEAS WITH THOSE OF YOUR FRIENDS, MAKING THEM SEE LIGHT AS YOU DO; JUDGE CHARACTER AS YOU DO; AND ENJOY THINGS WITH EQUAL ENTHUSIASM TO YOURS; MUCH OF THE MATTER LAID OPEN FOR DISCUSSION WOULD BE DIVESTED OF ITS CHARM; A CONVERSATION ROBBED OF ITS VERSATILITY AND WRITING OF ITS GROUND FOR HARSH CRITICISM, ESPECIALLY, WHEN THE WORK IS FOUNDED FOR THE GREATER PART UPON FICTION.

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CHAPTER I

HER home was in New York City. Her education had been given her within the walls of one of the most fashionable young ladies' seminaries, from which she was graduated with the highest honors, but not before having tasted of many of the experiences had by inmates of such walls. There was a great pretense regarding its faultless stability and its mental training, and much was said about the attention paid to preparing one for the "entrée dans le grand monde."

Twice a week the young ladies were permitted to receive friends in the evening, and suitable toilets were made for the occasions. Thus, some of the most desirable parties were entertained, and the manners of the young ladies watched over with great care. At stated times they attended the operas and theatres, these being considered means of advancement socially, as a young lady without society culture and refinement could never be launched into the upper circles, or claim the attention so heartily desired by her parents and family.

Upon their various walking expeditions startling and amusing occurrences took place, notwithstanding the vigilance bestowed upon them, some of them figuring in the after lives of these earnestly-sought-after young ladies.

Annita, the pathetic character of my book, was much beloved and formed many lasting friendships, though she was one of the merriest and most venturesome. With it all there was a certain dignity which commanded respect, and attracted admiration from the young men callers.

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One afternoon, in the neighborhood of the park, a dashing young man's attention was centered upon Annita, to the extent of making the chaperon indignant, and for some days other parts of the city were frequented for their daily exercise. But this greatly impressed individual was not to be so easily evaded, and the progress of their rambles was not infrequently impaired by his appearing upon the scene of action. Intuition taught Annita that she it was who had fascinated him and before long, as he was a stranger of considerable standing, he managed to appear upon the threshold of her life and to instill into her heart sentiments of extravagant admiration, the tales of which were related to her companions of no small degree of envy.

It was the delight of this Adonis—for such he was—to pass her home of the present time, not infrequently, and that in the gloaming. The young ladies were aware of it: One of them with unusually mischievous tendencies persuaded a lad to trip him up by stretching a wire across the sidewalk, thus affording cause for mirth, while putting a quietus upon his ardor.

There was a dash about him giving the idea that he was of Southern origin, and while that was the case, his present home was in the "Land of Sombreros," which he had not abandoned.

Ere long, through letters of introduction, his entrée to the best circles was assured him, and soon the young ladies were vying with each other for his favor. Time went on and toward the close of the season some doubts arose about him, and one was forced to say, "Beauty in either man or woman has

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ever been a dangerous thing since the days of Helen of Troy." He was not easily suppressed, and the wonder was how he kept his footing so well. Perhaps it was a case where men think their way through difficulties, where women feel them.

The pathetic character of this little romance is beautiful, intellectual and possessed of such charm and grace of manner as to win from the old, encomiums of praise upon her fascinations—from the young men such admiration as to cause her heart almost to be torn in shreds. For to each she would like to give a token of her most undying but uncertain love; while those of them whose attentions were a compliment declined sharing honors, and, stepping aside, waited to see the outcome of the game of love.

Fortune enabled her parents to send her far and wide in search of such last touches as many think advisable with a convent education—no doubt with others. In fact, to exchange well-guarded inexperience and timidity for self-reliance, and perhaps self-satisfaction. We are wont to think that the girl of push proves the greatest success, but in her case naturalness and staunch traits of character laid the seed for her future life, which was to grow in love for others, while it strengthened in love for herself.

Rather of a brunette type, her fine large brown eyes, so full of expression, first attracted your attention and then you found yourself pleased with her soft, wavy, chestnut hair, and her smooth Titian-like coloring, where sometimes rose hues spread themselves over her well-rounded cheeks; and her lips, always cherry-like, invited a disclosure of the pearly teeth so carefully concealed. The picture

was a pleasing one and not soon to be forgotten. Indeed, those who had seen it, would not be apt to do so, and are wont to ask for the outcome of a life starting out under such roseate hues. It makes a pretty little story even begun at the stage when she is developing into young ladydom, where every occurrence is developing into a halo of glory, and the most trifling incident adds to happiness and joyous expectations regarding the next denouement.

Her winter home was in New York and her admirers manifold, and of the most varied types, vying with each other for the honor of her preference. One of the just causes of her popularity was the fact that she was beloved by her girl friends as well, who, strange to say, seemed to cede to her the right to be as much loved as her sweet nature entitled her to be. Such characters are oftentimes weak, but in this instance that was not the case, though through the channel of love a golden thread could lead her. And yet the day was to come, not far distant, when she would assert herself, unfortunately to her detriment. Ere we reach this point, much is to be related of her life, with most varied experiences and interesting episodes.

Shortly after leaving school she took a trip abroad with a doting mother, whose every thought was centered in her, and the grand success she was promising herself life would be for her treasure.

They sailed away on one of the ocean's finest steamers having been showered with all manner of attention,—bouquets galore; bon bons from Huyler's choicest grade and most tasty arrangement; books with many touching sentiments marked in them, etc.,

and it was not long ere this charming and attractive young lady had inspired the passengers with great interest in her. Before the vessel set sail, friends flocked to it to bid them Godspeed and waved touching farewells. Amongst them was one who came near being carried away. Indeed, the gang-plank was in motion when he boarded it.

Long after land had been left behind, she sat motionless in a quiet spot, gazing far away, in a mist of tears, upon imagined spots of scenery, studded with the recollections of her dear ones. Mother was below aiding their maid in caring for future comforts. Chance arranged it that from amongst the floral offerings sent, she selected the one most pleasing to the eye, and it was destined to be long remembered, for imbedded in the La France roses—her favorite flower—was a note the perusing of which caused a glow of delight to overspread her countenance, adding perceptibly to the charm and the interest of the observing passengers. It was late before she left the spot, and aroused herself from her dream long to be remembered.

Going to her cabin, which had been selected by the tenderest of fathers, with only the thought of their comfort at heart, she listlessly prepared for the first meal taken aboard, and when shown to their table, seats were found to the right of the captain. The ceremony of presenting them had been gone through with when they boarded the vessel, but naturally, in the usual atmosphere of flurry, while youth's thoughts were otherwise engaged. Annita was soon made to realize that she must arouse herself in earnest from her dreams, which she strove to

do, but unable to divest herself of regret and longings for those left behind, there was a tinge of dejection which made her even more interesting, and when they left the table, her mother's pride was stimulated by the thought that her daughter had impressed all most agreeably.

Annita enveloped herself in suitable wraps and found a seat on the deck where she could watch the seagulls, and, as it were, whisper unto them sweet messages, to be borne to her dear ones ashore, for she knew that they would soon turn their backs upon the vessel and return to New York.

The moon shone brightly that night, and the canopy overhanging them was richly studded with twinkling stars; the splashing of the waves, the periodic calls of various kinds from the sailors, and the soft strains of music from the cabin below all tended to make Annita peacefully thoughtful, and to fill her heart with the fire of love.

It was then she conceived the idea of writing a note and getting one of the sailors to attach it to the neck of one of the gulls, and then see if anything came of it. The note was short but sweet. On its outer covering "Take to such an address and get your reward." The sailor, for a handsome compensation, did it up in such style that it did reach its destination, and from that episode sprang one of the sweetest romances of her life.

The voyage was, on the whole, a fine one. Passengers were many of them most agreeable, and though Annita had been warned by her father to be reserved, so pleasing were the attentions of some of the gentlemen that she found herself being greatly

sought after and much entertained—by one of them in particular, who upon close inquiry was found to be a Scotch-Irish gentleman of good social standing—Bradley McLaud.

Their time was passed in walking the deck; listening to lovely music; enjoying five meals a day, one might say, for it was breakfast, luncheon, afternoon tea, dinner and supper, all of which were well prepared and delightfully served. The captain enjoyed her charm and grace of manner, her beauty, lovely costumes and natural vivacity so much that the greater part of his attention was bestowed upon the girl whom he flattered by saying she reminded him of one of his own. What greater compliment could be paid, for “every crow thinks his own the blackest.”

There seemed to be a species of rivalry between two of the gentlemen: On the part of one it was most amusing, for he was a Frenchman, of entirely a different type from the Scotchman, and possessed of the impulsive nature which contrasted so forcibly with the Scotch deliberate characteristics, and it was not infrequently when they promenaded together that he would shower them with threatening glances, almost inciting a quarrel then and there.

Annita's mother became anxious, but they were assured by the other passengers there was no cause for alarm, so that the elegant handsome opponent of his, continued master of the situation; and the couple made a picture that gladdened the eyes of all, and, it would seem warmed their hearts.

So absorbed were they in each other that they were oblivious of what transpired about them. His only thought, barring Annita, was of her mother, to

whom he was far more than courteous, and some times when she was snugly tucked away in her steamer chair, they would sit near her and seem to form a happy trio. But for the most part, she was well provided with books, and aided in descending to her meals, when conversation was most general and jolly.

The passage lasted seven days and it was evident that this party did not like to see it approaching the end. As long as the moon shone poetry was ripe in their minds, and when it was about to hide its face back of the mottled sky the realistic side of life presented itself, and, no doubt, brought forth such a sigh as uncertainty alone can produce.

It was only through persuasion that Annita's maid carried the day and was permitted to store away in her cabin trunk some of her pretty gowns. The feeling was "Oh, I shall not need such things;" but Elise, not long from Paris, and with experience "*dans le grand monde*," knew far better the requirements of such occasions, and it must be admitted, her young mistress more than once expressed delight when she was donning the gown she thought the most becoming, and best calculated to please the eye of her Scotch admirer.

Elise regretted that Mademoiselle did not favor Monsieur, but frankly admitted the Scotchman to be "*un homme magnifique*." Mother felt, as all mothers do under such circumstances, that no man would just then fill the cup of her requirements, and that the case was not one which should arouse her anxiety, since similar ones had been left behind, and already were presumably forgotten.

The vessel was about to land, the custom officers so dreaded upon returning trips were not visible, hence one annoyance was spared them.

The couple had found a cozy corner where their last few moments might be spent in renewing promises and repeating the oft-told tale, when lo: Monsieur approaches and thrusts his card into the hand of the Scotchman, who looked disdainfully down upon him and cast it overboard. A challenge, with all of its alarming features, stared Annita in the face, and with greatest sweetness she quelled the storm upon the waves by advancing and entering into a conversation with this bundle of jealousy, whose bombastic manner and conceit had caused great amusement during the entire crossing. As the boat was about to land, significant and approving glances were exchanged between Scotland and America, and peace seemed to be restored with France.

The farewells were as such things ever are. Then why did Shakespeare say "Parting is such sweet sorrow?" The Captain was almost fatherly, and hoped they would return by his boat. Indeed some tender words passed his lips as he shook her hand and waved them farewell.

No one was surprised to see them escorted to the carriage by the two gentlemen, Monsieur giving his rival no chance to say a word apart, and the last glimpse the ladies had of them was their selecting their hand pieces, most likely to take entirely different courses.

The tale goes that an effort was made to ascertain the plans of the ladies, but with such unsatisfactory results that an exchange of heated words

almost called a policeman to the scene of action, which ended in the gentlemen each going his own way. Before many hours had passed the victor arrived at the hotel where his friends were stopping, possessed of such personal charms—for good clothes well disposed of certainly enhance the appearance of all of us—and they all remained there a few days and then crossed the channel together. It would seem that they were being pursued, but not so, as his business took him to France, where their preparations for the different watering places, perchance, or what traveling they should determine upon, required the necessary outfitting.

During the fortnight spent in Paris they were naturally thrown in each other's constant society and learned to feel that they could not exist apart. But the mails from home brought about a questioning feeling within Annita's heart, for the tenderest letters arrived with each of them, and fewer walks, drives and visits to the places of interest were taken. This almost crushed the valiant Scotchman, who began to realize that he had allowed his cup of hope to fill too rapidly.

Annita was a girl who, though reared in the lap of luxury, calculated to stimulate a vein of selfishness, had inherited a kindly nature, and regrets over her innocent, rather thoughtless encouragement began to beset her; and how to free herself from this entangled network of follies was her all-absorbing thought—I may say distressing one. Confidence in her mother, whom she had seen fit to mislead, was now out of the question. Then from whom was she to get the advice so needed at this stage of the game?

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This question she asked herself more than once, and finally determined to probe deeper into the heart of the man, whom inexperienced but wise judgment had taught her would prove himself, even under these trying circumstances, the soul of nobility. Her effort was not a fruitless one, indeed was crowned with the glory which later on in life met its merited reward.

Very soon thereafter she laid bare before him the situation of things, acknowledging that her mind was so full of doubts; her years so unripe; she so incapable of framing the outlines of a life still in the kernel; and as woman is wont to do, aroused his sympathy by shedding tears, and received in reply the avowal that for him she was the only woman and would not be tossed aside for another. But on no account would he jeopardize her happiness and while she was toying with her own fate, he would be biding his time in hopes that bravery would meet its just reward, which proved to be the case.

CHAPTER II

THE little note tucked away in the bouquet of La France roses came from a no less ardent wooer, who promised to join her shortly if she would only say where. He was handsome, refined and wealthy, from the American standpoint, which means much, of course, and was mother's preference, as an upheavaling of family ties would not be required.

The Scotchman soon bade them a manly farewell. "Really," he said, trying to be pleasant, "Only an Auf Wieder sehn," and when he had departed, questions of herself began to harass her mind. But as is always the case when we are not altogether satisfied with ourselves, she sought refuge in the thought that her American friend would soon arrive, which he did, and proved to be the most devoted lover, relating to her all about the receiving of the note from the gull's neck, which was delivered into his hands by one whom the reward greatly blessed, and had been the happiest moment of his life, encouraging him to hope and beg for the privilege of joining them.

All went well for a while, his bliss was unalloyed, but she often found herself contrasting the two men and rather leaning to the one of the greatest strength. It is oftentimes the case in life that what we have within our grasp is less prized than what is veiled in uncertainty. All the sights of Paris were enjoyed by them, always accompanied by her mother, as French custom requires, and though his attentions were of the most delicate and pleasing nature, she found herself constantly straying in mind to the "Land of Laddies."

At last the time came for them to visit elsewhere, and tear themselves from beautiful Paris, so they determined upon Eau Bonne, and Eau Chaud, in the Pyrrenean Mountains, places which in Eugenie's palmy days were the most fashionable resorts. The French nobility were wont to gather there, and they hoped that some of the beauty and picturesqueness of those times still remained, where peasant costumes representing the different cantons would be seen, and where lovely scenery which begins at Pau, their first important stopping place, enjoyed by them all, as her mother had once taken delight in it.

Reaching their destination they soon put up at the most important hotel, a stone's throw from the bath houses, and the waters to be drunk daily, all promising well, and the guests they saw about seemed of the most elegant class.

So that they retired after Annita and Charles had sauntered into the gardens far as the playing fountains, where swans swam gracefully about, and music filled the air, causing a light of satisfaction to shine from the eyes of the lovers, comparable to that alone of the stars above them. Bidding each other good night, they parted, he to seat himself on the veranda and enjoy a cigarette, with Oh, such glowing thoughts; she to retire to her room, disrobe, and then seated at the French folding windows, gaze long without.

Soon Elise said, if she had no further use for her it would be good night, and as the door closed a sigh of relief came from Annita, for she was at last alone—she above, he below, to indulge in fancy's wild

dreams. Weariness soon led each to their comfortable beds and the sleep of innocence followed.

The early morn shone in upon them with pleasing prospects, as the sound of lovely music reminded them that they were to meet in the palm room before going to the spring, where following in the natural course they would hand their glasses to be filled, and then going forth, sip of them while enjoying the study of human nature in that gathering of people from all parts of the world.

In due course of time they returned to the hotel, partook of a delicious breakfast, and mapped out the proceedings of the day. Eau Bonne and Eau Chaud are not far distant from each other, and they were then at the former, but intended to decide if in time they should go to the latter. With this end in view they drove off early in the day and en route were pleased with the country so different from their own, and descending from their funny little carriage would cull flowers and participate, when they could, in the peasants' language. She asked if he knew why the daisy was her favorite flower, and he replied, "No." Whereupon she said, because Keats had said when he was dying, "I feel the daisies growing upon me," and that because they were his sweetheart's favorite flower.

All along the road they saw quaint looking houses and still quainter looking people in the peasant costumes, and speaking the patois of the country, as well as playing on singular instruments rather of the zither type, sometimes accompanied by voices. They lunched there and about determined to make that a place to drive to, but Eau Bonne to stop at.

Along the road the usual beggar, with his beseeching eyes, often attracted their attention and generosity. Returning to the hotel they resolved to see something of the real life of this place, by entering into the spirit of it, and they started out in earnest the following day.

The second day after their arrival Annita's beauty and grace was seen attracting much attention, and ere long Monsieur, Le Counte, et Monsieur Le Baron, as well as My Lord, were essaying to pay homage at her shrine. Their attentions were gratifying to her vanity, but irritating to his jealousy. Soon small squabbles began which distressed him, but angered her, and finally there was a grand flare-up and Charles took his departure.

The mother and daughter tarried some time and then departed for Pau, where one of the English friends, met through some aristocratic acquaintances, induced them to stop over and have her take some lessons in the English style of riding—American she was familiar with—and he would see that she was given a chance to ride behind the hounds.

All this time John Bull's ardor was increasing with miraculous rapidity, and his people were showing much attention to Annita. True to his words, she did ride behind the hounds and saw the first fox, coming very near to it, which entitled her to the reward, namely, the tail of the animal, made into an appearing parasol, with an elegant gold-mounted handle placed therein. This she carried off, much to the disgust of the English women, rather inclined to be amused over the thought of an American woman being able to keep up with them.

Both mother and daughter were elated over this triumph, and remained long in Pau, to be greatly feted, adding greatly to the string of Annita's admirers. At short intervals news of some character concerning the Scotchman would reach them and it was learned that his strides towards prosperity were marvelous. On the quiet, Annita enjoyed this news, but flirt-like continued to toy with other hearts, until the day came that she was called to a halt and asked for a decisive answer concerning the ardent pursuer and contributor of her pleasures, which she declined to give until father should be consulted, affording herself a means of escape, as love for him was far from her thoughts. But the Englishman was not so easily quieted and soon letters were crossing the ocean to father asking for the hand of his daughter, etc., which brought matters to a culminating pitch, and made father demand their speedy return home.

Arriving in Paris for final arrangements their friend from the Land of Bagpipers accidentally was there, and without pushing his suit, made himself visible as well as useful, thus strengthening his own cause, but never again approaching the abandoned topic. That was too much for her, and before they parted she reproached him about not having asked about her particular enjoyments, etc., to which he replied, "No, my dear young lady, I have no right to do that, and am more than glad that you have had your dreams fulfilled." This aggravated her so much that she was almost overcome by grief, and pride alone bridled her tongue.

But he was wise and had mapped out his own plan of action. Of course, her inexperience caused

her to show her hand, over which he was rejoiced, seeing that things were coming his way, but having no idea of indulging impetuosity.

Telegrams were arriving from father, modistes were coming in fast, and soon they should set sail for home. Still only the most friendly interviews had taken place between them. He spoke modestly of his achievements, of the affairs of his family, and not for one moment did he contemplate loosening the strings about his heart.

The day came for them to leave Paris, and at the garre she expressed regret that he would not see them off on the vessel, whereupon he replied, "Do you know the force of your language?" which called forth a sweet and sad look from her eyes not to be doubted. Adieus were made and as she gave him her hand he saw moisture in her eyes not to be resisted, so he boarded the train bearing them off to Calais, and to the vessel homeward-bound.

Their parting was almost touching for Annita had not taught herself control and now she abandoned all effort to disguise and made him promise to come to New York before very long. Now, even his manly feelings were undergoing a very hard test, but he did find relief in the words, "I will be there in the near future if such a step is not distasteful to your mother." Her mother's ladylike instinct prompted her to say, "We will be glad to see you, but, of course, our daughter's happiness is our absorbing thought."

Now the cry came All Aboard! and soon the gang-plank was to be drawn in so that the final adieus were made and Annita's tear-bedecked eyes followed

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him long after—one might say, followed him by day and by night.

From what has been written, were a judgment passed upon the mother, it would be rather in favor of weakness of character, than strength, but in this an error would exist, for she was a woman of great force, but in her own plans of life she had been thwarted and for many years was most miserable, so that she determined to let Annita run the gauntlet, I may say, entirely unmolested, thereby most likely reaching its end before the glamour of life had faded away.

CHAPTER III

L UCK would have it that they crossed on the same vessel that took them over and soon An-nita beheld the kindly old Captain's eyes smiling down upon her with most sweet expression, and she almost feared a tell-tale face, on her part. But soon he had reached the goal of his researches, and, she, like a confiding child, had sought comfort from the fatherly man, because she feared disapproval from her own father.

The passage was not a smooth one and that brought the travelers more closely together and dispelled much of the usual reserve. The first day out their attention was attracted by a very elegant though frail young man, though possessed of the remnants of marked good looks, attended by an old gentleman whom he called Uncle, and a younger one whom he called Doctor. On deck he was cared for by a most attentive—one might say tender—valet. The third day out was too rough to admit of his appearing, but the coming and going from his cabin by all three of them showed that nothing was left undone for his comfort.

After several days of stormy weather, the ocean began to calm itself, the skies to become clear and inviting, when the passengers crept out of their retreat something on the order of jug-rats, and shaking themselves in the sunlight, invoked a prayer of thanks that they lived to tell the tale. How little they knew of what had taken place and of the sad hearts below, for the only child and adored son of a widowed mother had passed away during the tumultuous storm of the night before, as peacefully as the

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going out of the life of a dear infant, in its sweet mother's arms; and the old uncle looked down upon him through the eyes of a father he had gone to join, and the tears of an all-expectant mother, soon to have to realize that her crowning sorrow had come now.

Everyone was most sympathetic and that fear of death so often indulged in was dispelled when they learned that the remains were to be put in one of the swinging boats at the side of the vessel, the stateroom thoroughly opened, but the door locked that the fearers of germs might rest easy. Before the remains were consigned to the boat, one of the passengers wrote the following lines, which were pinned to the bosom of his shirt:

Oh, light that followeth all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day,
My heart restores its borrowed ray
May brighter, fairer be.

The Captain read the funeral service and the passengers sang appropriate hymns to the soft strains of music which came from Annita's fingers, into which much pathos was thrown.

Two days later the vessel landed and from amongst the peering eyes on shore were those of the widowed mother, clad in deepest mourning and trying to quiet anxious feeling when no sign of her boy greeted her. The uncle was the first to descend the gang-plank, accompanied by the doctor, and ere long heartrending cries reached our ears and almost saddened our return home.

Soon life was going on with its usual bustle and

even Annita's and her mother's sympathies were absorbed by their own personal interests. The appearance of a fond and anxious husband and father was a delight to them. He was accompanied by none other than Charles,—the sight of whom caused no heart fluttering on her part, though she strove to be most agreeable.

Landing in one's own country could not fail to arouse happy feelings, and being with a loving father was, of course, a source of comfort. Charles was soon absorbed by her mother, she by her father, who was, as well, the tenderest of husbands. But news of foreign occurrences filled his mind and he wanted to study his daughter, who had gone away not much more than a child, and now developed into a woman of her own strong propensities.

Many pleasant alterations had been made about their charming homes — the one in the city, the other on the Hudson — and the husband and father awaited the effect these would produce in his dear ones. Needless to say that the wife was delighted and that youth's exuberant feelings were given vent to in the daughter.

The father tried to read in the face of his child what his heart longed to know, but in vain, and then throwing the two young ones together watched for some expression of pleasure in her face that might illumine the light of hope in Charles' heart, for he was fond of him and would fain have seen him her choice.

Soon Charles took his departure and then the entire house was gone over and enjoyed so fully that the generous and loving heart was well repaid, and again home seemed the dearest spot after all, to the

travelers. The retinue of servants of long standing did their timely welcoming, and soon the arrival of huge trunks and cases caused commotion from which the father fled, until all was disposed of and consigned to orderly places, for order, with father, was certainly Heaven's first law, and the contrary was all that ever ruffled his nature.

That evening only members of the family were received, and experiences related, causing great merriment. Good nights were said, with Oh, so glad you're back again!, etc., and as the last notes of the final departure rang out the chime clock struck twelve and ere they retired another day had almost opened upon them.

Great was father's disappointment at not having had a talk with daughter, but far into the night and day news came to him through his wife. Annita had been snugly tucked away by her maid, Elise, and fatigue caused youth to fall into natural slumber very soon.

Annita was found greatly improved, and why should she not be, after such a glorious trip, though cut short by love's antics, destined to have full play through her life, for she had been spoiled and was wilful, in a way.

Somehow, though she loved her father, she dreaded the ordeal soon to be passed through, and resorted to all manner of ruses to prolong an agony she feared might be augmented. But the hour came when evasion was of no use, and when a chapter of questions, with all the pros and cons, was launched at her. Experience had taught this level-headed man that gentleness would be his most effective

weapon; therefore, leading her to an armchair, he took her upon his knee, and began by saying, "Well, darling, you must have much to tell me, and my father's heart is hungering for it all."

His words were so soft and gentle that she could not resist him and with an arm around his neck, she told much of the preceding tale with assurances that she could never forget her noble Scotch admirer. This father took *con granus*, knowing that many such tales had been told and time had proven them to be only the dreams of romance. But he was sympathetic and encouraged all of her confidence, then and in the future.

Old friends and admirers soon fell into the way of days gone by, and there was a round of pleasure, teas at home and abroad, theaters, operas, receptions, etc. A function of welcome home was given by her uncle, a man of wealth and distinction, followed by many others,—not the least of them her own, to which it would seem that chance good luck brought the Englishman, but soon to realize that her bow had too many strings for him to struggle with.

However, the matter-of-fact instinct of his nature soon caused him to gain solace from another source, this time with less beauty, perchance more wealth, and that we all know is not distasteful, especially to a roue of an Englishman. The young lady was no one less than Annita's best friend, Dorothy, and love had waxed strong between them ere her father felt called upon to ascertain the standing morally of this liege-lord, who had inspired in so many of the girls' hearts such envy of the lovely Dorothy.

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Dorothy's father, being a man of deliberation, took means of ascertaining that it was another instance of seeking American money, with family to offer in return, but not accompanied by commendable character. This information was not gained in a day and the intervening time afforded opportunity for the strengthening of love on both sides, especially that of a trusting young lady.

When Annita had had a surfeit of town pleasures, she conceived the idea of having a house party immediately after Christmas festivities, in their home upon the Hudson, "Benvenuta," and, of course, grand preparations were being made for it on the part of the invited guests, amounting to twenty-five. Their home was always in readiness, with fully equipped servants, equippages, etc., and in a few days after the determined-upon time there was a look of welcome about the grand establishment, which aroused interest in all about the neighborhood, and filled expectant hearts with delight. It was to be a ten days or more of not frequently experienced enjoyment, and fear of those not included in the invitations prompted her requesting perfect quietude, which was fortunately maintained. The couples were to some extent paired off, that is to say, each man with his special young lady, but that was not throughout the case, Annita having so many admirers, that it was a question in people's minds as to who the fortunate one was — but not so with herself.

Dorothy, had, of course, had her wish regarding the Englishman, which was fortunate for her, as it gave her an opportunity of learning from her friend what would have made her very unhappy if ascer-

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tained after their alliance. He was selfish, dictatorial, arrogant and conceited. One might fancy this a character overwrought with undesirable traits, but indeed this is not exaggerating in the least, and her dear father was spared much of his dreaded sorrow, by the absolute disinfatuation of his child when brought in immediate contact with him, and before long England was forced to smile again upon her son so cheerfully surrendered to another country.

The day after they reached the home where such a warm welcome was bestowed, the snow fell fast and thickly, soon decking the trees with nature's most beautiful mantle, and making the good cheer within all the more appreciated. Sleighs were ordered out and the guests in relays, one might say, drove through the woods behind dashing horses, the ringing of bells inspiring a dancing spirit within them. Being nestled away in long soft furs, cold was not felt, and the scenery was so picturesquely beautiful that one must perforce regret not having an artist's turn. Truly, the poem of the beautiful snow must have been remembered by some of them.

Until all had been upon this unusual round of pleasure the sleighs came and went, bringing back joyous people to fill the house with resounding voices of "Oh, how beautiful." "What a treat to the eye!" etc., but sad to tell, one of the young men in a mad desire to secure for his lady love a particular branch of a tree laden with icicles fell from the sleigh and narrowly escaped breaking his arm. The snow was all that saved him from an accident never to be forgotten. A doctor, of no poor skill,

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was called in, and after causing him some additional pain, soon had his arm in promising shape and the pleasure of the party was continued, and Flora, an acknowledged skilled nurse, was so faithful in her care of him, that a question point had to be admitted, and with an exquisitely blushing face, at the side of a bandaged arm, congratulations were offered, and healths drunk to amid the clashing of glasses and the jeering of somewhat astonished friends.

That night cards were played, songs were sung, —many of them college ones —and sweet soft strains of music from the fingers of girls of talent filled the air, and encouraged that sentiment so natural where love is ripe in one.

A delightful supper closed the first day, the pleasure of which had been to a great extent marred by the accident. Snow fell in heavy flakes and the light which illumined the grounds of the sumptuous home peeped through every here and there like shining stars, which made one think of the teachings of the German children — the one that “When it snows the angels are shaking their feather beds;” the other that “The visible lights come from the hands of the angels,” sweet and wonderful thoughts to a little one; pretty and inspiring ones to the elder ones.

All slept late the following day, and the first glance from the windows, which were frost bedecked, made one throw out their warm breath upon them, then scrape the pane and exclaim, “Oh, how beautiful!” The icicles hanging from the trees were a mass of glistening stalactites, making the scene a veritable fairyland.

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All assembled at a late hour in the breakfast room where a cheerful fire of massive hickory logs was burning, crackling and sending forth a pleasant odor from their sap. As each person entered the room there was a hearty ejaculation of some kind, and soon around a delicious and bountiful breakfast repast, presided over by the most hospitable of hostesses, all sorts of merry plans were made for tobogganning and all manner of frosty sports.

All through the day gladsome voices resounded through the air, but they were not the only joyous ones, for the villagers, too, had a peep at the lives of those grand people, whom they almost revered, but must be admitted, with a tinge of envy. The ground was covered deeply by a blanket of snow, but it no longer fell, and as the sun shone upon it no more beautiful picture could be portrayed. It would seem as though Aladdin's lamp had shed its rays upon this joyous household, for it was indeed a veritable fairyland, and so far there had been but one flicker in the light, that, when love prompted a hazardous leap, now well nigh on the list of the forgotten episodes.

Young people never collect together with a view of having a jolly time without having their heads full of all sorts of pranks and jokes. This was not an exceptional occasion. One of the amusing incidents is worthy of record, as it was fraught with great alarm, followed by equally as much hilarity. As evening approached and the gloaming was shedding its soft grey over everything, they sat in the different quiet corners paired off, discussing past and coming events.

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By order, the downstairs of the house was not extensively lighted, and thus it was that a disguised man gained entrance to the house, and demanded valuables from the guests, who, terrorized, made no objections. The gentlemen protested, but being unarmed were powerless in defending their rights. When all available portables had been stored away in his sack he made his exit, and it was seen that there was an accomplice with him.

Once the doors were closed and everything securely barred they gazed at each other in astonishment and frenzied alarm and one of the young ladies who had swooned came gradually to, remarking earnestly, "How glad we should all be that our most valuable articles were either at home or not upon us." Even with people affrighted as they were, this caused laughter, as it would seem their lives were merely secondary matters, and she was teased for many days about valuing her worldly goods more than her life.

That evening instead of being hilarious they sat quietly around a bright fire, popping corn, toasting marshmallows, and the men scaring the girls almost stiff with their ghost stories, and each little crack of the furniture, shake of a window sash, or jar of a door, would cause them to shudder and suppress a nervous laugh.

When bedtime came it was with greatest temerity that they were escorted to the upper floor by the gentlemen, to be confronted by maids huddled together, and only too ready to say, "Was it not awful, miss?" Every bed was occupied by two girls, all communicating doors left open, the outer

ones bolted and barricaded, secured with a woman's greatest safeguard, a chair beneath the knob of the door. Shades drawn down to exclude every ray of even the most beautiful moon and starlight, up to this time so much enjoyed, but a dim light came to them through the transom.

After some time fatigue overtook them, for house parties are very lively things and it is not a time for repose, and they fell off asleep to be aroused by the stamping of horses without, which ordinarily would have created no consternation — now it did — but happily to learn that the wrong grounds had been entered.

After the young ladies had retired the gentlemen repaired to the library to smoke, and then one of them, a wag of a fellow, confessed to its being a put-up job, of which the hostess was aware, hence her behavior was a pretty piece of acting. Upon one of his trips to the village he had secured the services of a reliable party to carry out this little well-plotted scheme, and an advertisement, with a liberal reward offered would restore the spoils to their owners, before fright had induced them to break up the house party.

On the morrow the sun came out in all its glory, soon drying the paths and driveways so that they paired off and sauntered away, going to the hot houses, the palm conservatories, the farm and barnyards, the stables, etc., with such fine horses. One of the houses was a "vacherie," comparable on a very small scale to the one just out of the Bois de Boulogne of Paris, and here fine cows were

kept, which provided the city house with milk, cream and butter during the winter months.

The poultry yards were interesting to see, especially as they were presided over by an old German of questionable age and most interesting history. According to his own tales he had served among the domestics of Emperor William in the same capacity and had fled from his country to escape chastisement for a fight he had taken part in over the girl he called "Mein Schatz," and disguised had come to this country fearing that if death were the result of his anger he would be imprisoned. Some years after reaching here, Amelia had found his whereabouts and assured him of her fidelity, but he never forgave her greater interest in his rival, and so far had taken no steps to renew their friendship, though "Mein Lieber Amelia" interlarded all his speeches and it was evident he had grown old while fathering fond love for her.

Lunch brought them all together again and each one related their experiences. The instigator of the joke told that he had offered a fine reward for the recovery of the lost valuables and thought he was on the track of them already. All eyes and ears were opened and immediately he was the center of interest, and a promise was made to the effect that their plans of amusement should not be interfered with, but that all should continue in the same jovial vein.

That evening while some were dancing, others were planning tricks to be played upon certain members of the party, and the next day, the mail brought a letter from a faraway sweetheart, asking

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one of the gentlemen to join her at Palm Beach, with its magnificent, sumptuous hotels, not to be surpassed anywhere; the guests with their costly and elaborate toilets; the music inspiring one with a wish to credit all the tales of love's fond dreams, while figuring one's self in an interesting flirtation. The drives, equestrian parties leaving the hotels daily on spirited horses, under the control of the most charming and suitably gowned ladies; the woods so well calculated to remind one of lovers' lanes or retreats, since time immemorial written and talked of; the beautiful blue sky not to be more gorgeously depicted by the brush of an Italian artist; the queer little traps to which one is consigned to roam from place to place; and all that is wanting to make you fancy yourself in beautiful, sunny Italy is the hand extended and the beseeching eyes, which even without words tell their tale of woe. To this dreamland I am asking you to allow yourself to be transplanted from a scene comparable to that of Mont Blanc, the thought of which makes me shiver with cold, and I promise your welcome shall be a warm one.

It was amusing to see him trying to control his delight while he strove to find some excuse for taking his departure. Finally, at the table he said, "Miss Annita, I was thinking matters over when I remembered an important engagement I had lost sight of which requires my presence in the city tomorrow." Annita, rather provoked, for he was one of the gayest of the party, said, "Well, as it was thoroughly understood that only sickness or death should disturb

our party, I fear I shall have to decline excusing you."

Words waxed warm when a wink from one of the gentlemen set Annita at ease, and she replied, "Very well, there will be, in all probability, more house parties." His excuses were profuse and his arrangements made that evening for an early departure. Adieus were made that the young ladies should not be disturbed in the early morn.

Reaching their rooms, Annita exclaimed, "It was a joke to be nipped in the bud!" namely, before he took his departure, which was gratifying news, for he was, as is generally the case in house parties, the main essence of joviality, and kept the ball of amusement constantly rolling. But, lo! when at the last moment his suitcase was missing, fancy the uproar of indignation, which was only quelled by disclosing the joke, and assuring him the day was still young and their pleasures only just begun.

That day Annita received a telegram announcing the arrival of her Scotch friend in America, and though she longed to see him, then and there did not strike her as an opportune moment. Yet, delay would be trying for her and disappointing to him, so betaking herself to her room when a game of cribbage was going on in one room, and various other amusements elsewhere throughout the house, she could easily slip away, and conferring with her mother, determine upon the best thing to do.

"Why not write him to call upon your father at once and then send a few lines explaining to him that you would like to have them come out together the next evening?" This plan of action determined

and acted upon, Annita's strongest efforts were called into play that she should not betray herself. This might be the only opportunity of showing him their lovely home, and, of course, was one of her dearest wishes, as she had told him much about it. How from the tower of their house West Point could be clearly seen; how many cadet balls she had attended, when buttons seemed to be the highest ambition of her heart, etc.; how Tilden's place — "Greystone"—now owned by the famous lawyer, Samuel Untermeyer; Helen Gould's place, called "Lyndhurst," and many more noted residences were also in sight from the tower of Benvenuta, and frequently passed in automobiles and otherwise.

Then she asked him if he had ever read Washington Irving's works, the stories of Wolfert's Roost, Sleepy Hollow, etc. The story of the spring on the banks of the river, which was thought to be like the one sought by Ponce de Leon, and the Dutch tradition was that the spring had been brought over from Holland, in a churn by Femmelia Van Slocum, wife of one of the first settlers, for she said she would never find such water in a new country. The chronicles of Wolfert's Roost, Sleepy Hollow, etc., by Washington Irving are all most interesting and touch frequently upon the Hudson River. History tells us that the Roost and all its domains were sold by the Indians for Aqua Vita, and it fell into the hands of Dutchmen. The origin of the virtue of the horseshoe was with them. In times of war the burghers nailed horseshoes to their doors and this superstition is still kept alive.

Now she joined her company to take a lively part and enter with great zest into their amusements, and while they were at lunch a detective's name was announced with the statement that he thought he had brought back their stolen goods. Annita's mother, asking to be excused, left the table, and upon returning said for their dessert the articles would be placed before them that each might select his or her own property. Then came the question, "But what is going to be done with the awful man who well-nigh broke up our party?" The answer was that he had hidden the effects and then fled, so that justice could be meted out to no one, and the reward offered would be gladly given to the party who returned them. Soon all were collecting their effects together — and in many instances with sincere delight, for associations made the articles very dear to them.

That afternoon a gallop over the hills with some, a motor ride with others, and an excuse from a few others to write or rest, ended the day, and brought them in time to Annita's birthday anniversary dinner, which was unanticipated by those present, and would gladly have been postponed for the arrival of the Scotchman, but telegrams and packages divulged the secret and things had to proceed. Father was disappointed at not being with them, but man's convenient excuse — business — was brought forth, when in reality the newly arrived was the cause. Toasts were drunk and the bouquets of Annita's fond admirers gathered about this beautiful and sumptuous board knew they had never seen her look so divinely lovely as on this occasion. How

little did they dream that very soon the light of the lovers' eyes would tell a tale that they could vainly attempt to suppress, and the following out of which would well nigh break the heart of her parents, for to give up their all meant to leave life desolate for them.

Charles had been their choice, he as well as other admirers had been at the party, and had each one been full of hope throughout the visit. But what gloom might not the morrow cast over everything, and yet, no, as Annita had planned that the meeting between her father and Bradley should be alone and he was to be most guarded in his attention so that, perchance, the disguise would be effective, and the delightful spell of the visit continue on to the end.

The Scotch friend was present at luncheon the following day and charmed everyone. By sundown the young ladies were discussing freely his attractions and questioning Annita about where she had met him and how she had resisted him. Her answers were calm and indifferent and it must be admitted she played her part so adroitly that nothing was suspected, and her parents perfectly satisfied.

The remaining two days the gentlemen strove hard to make agreeable to the stranger. Indeed, he took a gallop over the hills, with the greatest beauty — save for him, Annita — the day before they departed, and that evening she had quite a little flirtation with him, in the most delightful spot, the palm room, where the playing of the fountain, the chirping of the birds, the splashing of the gold fish in the water; the moon's rays peeping through the

branches of the palms, all tending to inspire love and sweet speeches.

But loyal Scotchman, while obeying instructions, had no idea of being false to his heart's selection, and was so staunch that when the girls had assembled that evening and were discussing him, the companion of the evening pronounced him "As cold as a fish," greatly to the amusement and quiet delight of Annita, who said, "I do not think them a race of much ardor." His charms were dilated upon and the regret rang out that he had not been with them all the while.

The following was the last day and when Charles left Annita's side, where he was much of the time, causing her friend no little anxiety, he had a few moments with her which sufficed to clear any impending clouds, and her attention was not given Bradley lest their wisely-laid plans should be frustrated, and he accepted the situation with such grace that he made himself most popular on all sides.

At last dinner toasts were offered, none more elegant and appropriate than the one by the new-comer, which pleased the host and hostess while compelling the young lady of the house to say, "Be still, my heart, and bide your time."

After dinner they started off in the beautiful grounds for a last farewell and then chance brought Annita and the Scotchman together for just long enough to thrill their hearts with happiness, but to tell them that a game so far well carried out must continue to the end. And when Charles approached them he sought other company, giving Charles a chance to plead his cause more earnestly than ever

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before. But at the side of the brook, where the light from the moon enabled them to see their shadows in the water, and while the chiming of the bells of the village church rang forth, a knell of despair came from his heart when she told him it could never, never be; and sauntering toward the house his absence was not felt, as preparations for the morrow necessitated his repairing to his own room, where only a like sufferer could offer any sympathy to him. When seen and his pallor commented upon he pleaded indisposition and retired early, which was not marveled at.

The following day a jolly party terminated a long-to-be-remembered, delightful house party, and they all returned to the train, as they had come, in automobiles, save the father, who said, laughingly, when departing in a trap before the others, "It behooves me to land our stranger where I brought him from," and with a crack of the whip they drove off, affording him a chance to give the father an insight into himself as a man whose life had been a clean one, and his antecedents of the proudest race.

They did not take the same train, as their drive was prolonged, and Annita saw him for the first time really alone, in the gloaming, as he dined with them, and in the meantime a charming bouquet of her favorite La France roses, with his first genuine heart's outpourings from the land of America, the home of his proud selection, had been sent.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY in the day her father returned and taking his child in his arms said, in a sad tone of voice, "Daughter mine, he is a man, and from all I can learn, promises well; only I should exact deliberation that I may be satisfied on all points, and you have sufficient time to know the world and your own heart, as your youth scarcely permits you at present."

When his card was brought up Annita, who had dressed very painstakingly, took a final glance in the mirror, touched a powder puff to her face, and descended, somewhat flustered, to be greeted as warmly as proprieties permitted, for it must be remembered they were not yet an affianced pair.

It was not long before dinner was announced and her friend shown into a dining room where every evidence of greatest elegance and finest good breeding existed. All the experiences of the house party were related for the benefit of the two gentlemen and at times hearty laughter indulged in. Especially when the account of the encounter of one of the gentlemen with their greatly petted nanny goat was graphically given by Annita's mother, who had been witness to the whole affair and entered into a sworn compact to guard the secret until town was reached, when he, himself, would enjoy the ludicrous side of it, while not denying others the same right.

But fancy this dude of a man being taken unawares and being thrown into the air, when he attempted to pet Miss Nanny, and landed on his feet to wonder what had befallen him, and sneaked

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back to the house to make repairs upon his person and apparel. I guarantee Nanny was given a wide berth ever after, and the scratches received accounted for in a plausible way. But when the mother thought of it she would be convulsed with laughter, which became contagious, and made the entire party most merry.

After dinner they repaired to the library where coffee was served and cigars enjoyed, until the daughter went to the parlor, and playing some of the old familiar vessel airs soon heard her friend's footsteps approaching, and standing at her side the whole scene of their early meeting was forcibly presented to his mind, which brought true happiness to them, and before saying good night his favorite song filled the air with the soft notes of his voice accompanying hers. And their parting was one full of promise — not in words, but in esprit d'accord.

Hers was a peaceful slumber, his a restless one, since he had long since taught himself that life without her would be as naught, and he said to himself:

"I would flood your pathway with sunshine,
I would fence you from all ill;
I would crown you with all blessings
If I could but have my will."

Morning dawned with every promise of a nice day and accompanying four beautiful roses which he sent her was a note saying, "I await your order as to when I may see you, and if I may be permitted to accompany you in any of your wanderings of the day." With her mother, it was determined they should go in the automobile for a spin through the park in the afternoon, and not unexpectedly, they

met many of their friends, some of whom were with them at the house party, but not yet did they surmise anything out of the ordinary, as it was to be expected she would pay to a foreigner in a strange land attention.

New York was no strange land to him, but this they did not as yet know, and it was as well they should not, since this caused allowances to be made for their frequent companionship.

That evening some of the house party called to review the great fun they had had, and to open up the subject of Miss Nanny's lack of courtesy to the grand dude of the party, who even then felt his amour propre greatly wounded by the joke too good to be enjoyed alone. Some of his friends nicknamed him "Nanny," which at first he received most amiably, but soon he called a halt and became so indignant that there was a turn in affairs, and he said, "He laughs best who laughs last."

Being bent upon availing himself of the first opportunity to even up with these merrymakers, he put on his thinking cap and awaited the time when success would attend him. It was Easter Sunday, the full blossomed trees filled the air with fragrance and joy, when the most obdurate of these friends, sauntering along Fifth Avenue, with his best girl of the day, was brought to a halt by a man who said, "I regret to have to urge the payment of this bill long since overdue," which he handed him and sped away. The friend was abashed and at sea for a suitable explanation of such procedure. Mortified beyond conception, he bade the young lady farewell at the door of her home, and then

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gave vent to man's most forcible language, which some of us have heard. It was not long before the joke was thoroughly probed and pistols and coffee talked of, but suppressed by the other friends, who even prevented a separation of life-long friends, by showing the amusing side of it.

CHAPTER V

THE Scotchman had enjoyed every moment of his visit and left the country apparently no more wealthy than when he came to it, but in reality carrying away a pearl far more valuable than the "Moonbeam" or the "Hope," considered the finest known gems of that class.

By mutual consent it was agreed Annita should have another season in society, and her father was to interest himself in bringing about business arrangements for the Scotchman, Mr. McLaud, that would give America and Scotland share and share alike of their lives. Parting was a trial to both of them since they were now affianced, and instead of the tell-tale ring, hers was a befitting jeweled heart enclosing his picture; his a picture in the back of his watch, and a small pendant to his watch chain enclosing one single curl.

So carefully had their intercourse been guarded that no one suspected the state of things, though one evening when they attended the opera in a party given by him, and afterwards went to the Waldorf for supper, one of the gentlemen overheard words that only dexterous handling prevented showing their standing. His departure was a means of misleading the public, and he promised to keep his hand on the hilt of patience; to prove one of the tentative kind, ever trying and making the effort. To look ahead for one whole year was a severe test, but for the good to be obtained everything would be risked and nothing lost, their perfect confidence in each other prompted them to think.

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Back in the land of his forefathers thoughts were bestowed upon advancing himself in every way that would make him more worthy of his prize, and his hours of pleasant pastime were given to thoughts across the sea, of the one with whom he so longed to be. Her life fulfilling her promise to still-questioning parents was spent in the whirl of dissipation, where there was no end to the adulation given this sweet, but true, girl.

“Have we not all, amid life’s petty strife,
Some pure ideal of a nobler life?”

Three letters a week were borne across the waters to him, daily one reached her, and it must be admitted that the Lenten season was welcomed with delight, and an absence from the city to go to a secluded spot in Lakewood, suggested as a most pleasant and needed relaxation. There it was her wish to live incognito, if it were possible. To enter truly into herself, strange as that may seem with a society girl. But love ripens the nature and develops one into womanhood, as does naught else.

In the adjoining house to theirs, a beautiful cottage, there lived a handsome young widower with one child. He sought refuge in this quiet place under the roof of an old aunt, when in deepest bereavement. The child was a fascinating boy of three years, with golden ringlets hanging profusely about his head, and lustrous brown eyes, serving as windows to that pure soul, from which came tender sentiments, bespeaking a longing for what a mother gives, and is received unawares. No father could have been more tender, but it would seem that his grief followed him unceasingly, and upon inquiry

it was ascertained that his wife had died at the time of the second child's birth. She was a daughter and preceded her mother that she might be one of the angels at Heaven's portals and guide her into a happier home.

The little fellow crept one day across the dividing line of their property, and seeing the pretty sweet face of Annita raised from her hammock, approached her, heeding the call of a gentle voice, and soon made friends, while she caressed him and smoothed his soft curls. Ere long the father's cry, "Albert, Albert, dear" came from the house and the little fellow fled, to be heard saying, "Pretty lady, daddy, come and see."

Annita lay motionless thinking of this dear, lovely child and of his sad face, until the quiet veil of twilight was wrapping itself about her, when she entered the house to approach the fire, and there in the embers on the hearth she continued her dream, and suppressed the questioning of God's justice.

Annita's life was what she wanted it to be and her mother facilitated its being so. One day when she went to the beach to stroll on the sands, looking out upon the rippling, frozen waters, she was surprised that the gentleman and his little boy were already there, so she took the opposite direction from theirs, but not before the little fellow had seen her and again cried, "See pretty lady, Daddy." Some distance away, and far from the water's edge, she sat down beneath the branches of an ice-covered tree, for now was not the time for her to saunter unrestrained. That would come after her quiet had been restored, when she could long for a plunge

and regret that the season did not admit of it, for she knew that she was swanlike in the water. Nevertheless, she inhaled invigorating salt air, realizing that all resorts did not possess the charm of this one, both physically and mentally.

Many days elapsed before chance brought them together again, and then under distressing circumstances. She was seated in a secluded corner of the veranda, when a piercing shriek reached her ears, which came from the little fellow in the yard, who had been bitten by a snake, evidently coming from beneath the porch. Running to him quickly, all available remedies were applied, Annita attending him with all possible gentleness, for the aunt was an aged lady and her own mother not near at hand. Quickly the doctor was despatched for, but while Annita held him in her arms, striving to quiet him, his father approached rapidly, seeing that something was wrong. The little fellow looked up with streaming eyes, to say, "Pretty lady, Daddy," which made him lift his hat, and looking down into her tender brown eyes, thank her and suggest relieving her to which Annita did not demur, as she, herself, had been greatly frightened and at loss about what to do. This was her first experience with a child, and not infrequently thought of in after life.

While the little fellow was recovering, Annita went often to see him when she knew his father was away, and his fond caresses endeared him to her. Indeed, once when he was dozing off into his sleep, the words, "Mama, dear" escaped his lips, and almost brought tears to Annita's eyes. He had evidently been thinking of his mother, and that made

her pity him as never before.

When he was quite himself again and able to come and sit on her porch, a box of flowers came with little Albert's love, and once the little child said, "Daddy likes you," because he had heard his father say, she was a dear kind lady; another instance of little pitchers, sometimes a dangerous thing.

It was approaching the time for Annita to return home. Warmly wrapped, she strolled off into the beautiful woods. The sun shining enticed her to take a seat on a fallen branch of a tree, overstretching a small frozen brooklet, where peeping here and there could occasionally be seen mosses, stiffened by cold, ferns, and pebbles, adding greatly to the scenery. She indulged long in thoughts of her staunch Scotchman, whose letters had given her so much pleasure, and a feeling of peace and quiet was stealing over her when she heard steps in the distance, and looking up beheld Daddy with his little son by the hand, who, breaking away from his father, ran to Annita and embraced her. This brought Daddy and Albert's friend again face to face, and a few passing remarks were made, destined to ripen into a strong type of friendship, which might ultimately have culminated into a lasting tie, for in those far-seeking, lustrous, violet eyes there was a world of pathos, and his voice had a ring of sadness which aroused sympathy — often the keynote to love.

Before Annita departed they met some times upon the walks, and as night gathered about them, playing with its silvery shadows, and the lark filled

the air with its sweet music, fancies were carried far away. Before adieus were made Annita had learned much of the sad side of Daddy's life, and had given him her deepest sympathy. His wife had been his boyhood love, and though at first their alliance was a disputed one, as he had only birth and manhood to offer to one not blessed with worldly goods — her parents had hoped for better prospects for their daughter — their lives had been peacefully happy and his advancement so creditable that her parents learned to love and appreciate him, and in their hour of sorrow showed that he had been taken unto them as a veritable son.

As little Albert kissed her goodby he cried and said, "Will pretty lady come to see me?" Her reply was, "Yes, and take you for a ride in the park."

She departed with several only casually-read letters, which carried her away to far-off, beautiful Scotland, the land of the bagpipe, and interesting Highland costumes. Above all, to the side of the man for whom love had not flagged in the least, and she found herself pressing the locket to her lips, while regretting the sad phases of Daddy's life, who, it must be admitted, had grown in her interest and sympathy.

Her father's welcome home to them, and his admission that they were both improved, was most gratifying, and home was sweeter than ever to the wanderers of almost two months. Soon friends, and still hopeful admirers gathered about them as the moth around the candle, and life rolled on in more serenity, for Annita had mapped out a more useful life for herself — one interlarded with study and

improvement, inspired by the wish to rise in the respect of the man of her choice.

Admirers often listened to her lovely singing, when her thoughts would be far across the waters. But she was acceding to the wishes of her parents in giving herself an unquestioned testing, and where duty is your aim you may say:

“Beautiful lives are those that bless;
Silent rivers of happiness.
Whose hidden fountains but few may guess.”

Each day a leaf was torn from the calendar and time went peacefully, but lovingly, onward. It was not long before summer plans were being discussed, the one of going abroad with not the least interest, to be sure. But father did not altogether favor this, and he did recommend Manchester-by-the-Sea, and though neither wife nor daughter warmed up to this suggestion, his was the ruling voice, but ever guiding with peaceful serenity. A cottage was leased, by way of reconciling them, and those of the household domestics taken along.

It was not long before they were enjoying both the place and the people, as well, and the amusements. Not far distant from them was the charming hotel of the Mascanoma, a house once noted for being a favorite resort of Booth, the actor, and near enough to Boston to admit of going there, when more than ordinary diversion was required.

Caught out one day in a frightful storm, they took shelter in a farm house, and from it witnessed a storm not soon to be forgotten. The tossing and rolling of the waves, with the sharp lightning playing about the craft, and the tiny boats thrown

hither and thither on the angry billows, with the rolling thunders, made one almost forget the poor souls aboard of them, while wrapped in admiration and appreciated wonder of the power and might of God; so often lost sight of in the passage of life. It was a sight long to be remembered and the electrical influence upon the horses was felt so keenly that they pranced and danced much of the way home, forcing the coachman to resort to his greatest skill in their management and the stirring question on reaching the hotel, where they went for information, was, "I wonder if anyone has perished?" At candle light the people of old would say, "Now it is nightfall." When the angry sea had quieted down news came to the effect that many crafts and boats were aground, and they feared that some lives might have been lost. There were, as long as one could see, beautiful whitecaps on the waters, and the tide washed foamingly upon the musical sands, as they are called, sweeping angrily about the rafters of a stand used sometimes for music, but generally for lookers on who wished to be sheltered from the sun's rays.

Next morning news came of considerable damage having been done and the loss of one man's life, whose family were poor, one member an invalid. Annita was the first to start a purse, but in the most unostentatious manner, heading the list with \$500, a hundred for each of them, with the request that their names be withheld. There is a saying, and though not elegant, most truthful, namely that we are most of us copy-cats; and so it was in this instance, as before long many had contributed, and

the sum swelled to such figures that the sharp pangs of their grief were softened by the mitigation of their wants.

That night there were beautiful searchlight effects upon the water, coming presumably from a vessel far away from land, and watched by the curious with great interest; but no decisive conclusion was reached that evening concerning it, and when the brilliant light discontinued myriads of stars sprang forth intensifying the beauty of the heavens, enjoyed by all not participating in the ball room festivities. Some writer tells us "Appreciation is a factor in happiness, but that, too, must be an indirect result, and not a conscious aim."

Every effort was being made to divest Annita's mind of faraway thoughts, and as no suspicion was entertained by any one of the actual condition of things, many mamas were laying themselves out to captivate her for their favorite sons. It was amusing to see the ruses resorted to, and most of all to hear their side remarks about such a phlegmatic, difficult personage.

Annita chanced to learn of the criticisms of her character. At first she bore them patiently, but finally the fire of her indignation was aroused, and she handled one of the mamas, who had been ruthless in her remarks, in such a masterly manner that all ideas of a wanting force in her character were dispelled, and while many chose to call her high-spirited, if not tempered, others were just enough to appreciate, while they do say patience is the virtue of a mule, who trots beneath his burden and is quiet, one could hardly expect similar tolerance from

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human beings. The stand that Annita took gained for her unquestioned admiration and approval of her dignified behavior, while her mother's heart was again stimulated by the love she felt was daily increasing; and when her father joined them, and everything was related to him, his verdict was that even though still young, she was able to cope with any emergency and that he was proud of her.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES did not entirely vanish from the horizon of her life, but flitted periodically before her, as does the moth before the candle, whose wings have been singed — a trite saying, but so often repeated,—and disregarding that experience, he did not keep out of danger's way. It would seem that he had said, "Faint heart never won fair lady," but Annita was not disposed to trifle with his feelings, and only wished to give him that which was adequate to thorough, and perfect understanding of each other — nothing more.

All this time our reader might fancy that Dorothy had gone out of her life, but such was not the case, for she was very fond of her and frequently indulged in the hope of bringing Charles and her together, thus cementing the tie of friendship between them; as it were building a wall about the four.

So far, Annita had called her heart's choice by none but his family name, perchance fearing the truth of too much familiarity. About this time the ice was beginning to melt away and upon his birthday he received a letter addressing him for the first time as Bradley. Fancy for a moment his happiness, for while such a thing may seem unnatural, it is none the less true, for hers was a reserved nature, and constant struggle was being made to divest her of love for a foreigner, because the thought of separation was so heart-rending to her parents.

But everyday life is woven with threads of purple and gold, and the eternal mysteries and tragedies of our lives exist ever about us and in us. Love cer-

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tainly is a queer thing, and right here let me tell you a true story, which will show you what a blessing it is to be endowed with an active, quick brain: In years gone by an entertainment for a famous charity was being given, and one of those taking part, being troubled with stage fright, there promised to be a failure, when unhesitatingly, the ready-witted party said,

“Love it is a queer thing;
Love it is a dizziness;
Love it drives the young man home from his business.”

This coming in when a tender passage had been reached, seemed perfectly right and gave the young stage affrighted time to recover himself and proceed most calmly, while the audience understood it to be a part of the play, which was a grand success. Love caused the stage fright, he frankly admitted, his thoughts concentrating themselves upon the recipient of the tender speeches that should have been proclaimed, fright overtook him and a catastrophe evaded by presence of mind, as well as wounded pride spared partaking people. That was one of the noted occasions which pointed to the present success of the writer of fame and the actor of great gift. To write a play and be able to act it is found but rarely.

Sometimes diverging from one's subject is permissible, and here there seemed to be an excuse for attracting one's attention to the fact that love has its queer side, if not to the interested party, at least to the lookers on.

As a last effort to the accomplishment of her great

desire, Annita invited Dorothy to come and pay her a visit, and she made it her pleasure to gradually bring Charles and Dorothy much together and often alone. Dorothy had been slowly recovering from her disappointment with the Englishman. Charles was still trying to learn the lesson that everything is not within one's reach. Before long moonlight strolls, canoe outings, walks through the woods, and sun baths on the beach, as well as reclining in the white sand, were quite the thing; and while Annita still guarded her secret most sacredly, the reception of frequent letters from abroad aroused suspicion in Dorothy, who ventured to tease her friend, but with such poor results that again she was disarmed, and being absorbed by her own matters, any explanation was satisfactory.

When Dorothy had been with her three weeks and was off attending to some of her own affairs, Charles sought the opportunity to tell Annita he was engaged, and to say that while he would be a good husband to Dorothy, he had told her it would be long before he could forget his first love, and to her he accorded the same privilege.

They returned to the city affianced, as sanction had been granted by her parents, and it was Annita's privilege to aid in all the matrimonial arrangements.

Annita was to have been matron of honor and everything promised grand success, when a full knowledge of Charles' character was brought to light, the inexcusable misdemeanor of his life for many of the previous years, all showing a nature so devoid of manhood and integrity, that Dorothy's

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friends were forced to pain her by a disclosure of the facts, and thereby caused her another fearful insight to man's character, crushing her so that for a time her health was in imminent danger, and only a sense of duty to her parents already feeble, caused her to rise equal to the occasion and to arouse in her friends' minds, a genuine sense of deepest admiration and respect for her. Annita was the consoling friend to all, and it was she who packed away everything of a matrimonial nature, and replaced the mantle of original elegance, without the glamour of what might be called ostentation, and when quiet was restored, Dorothy took up the thread of life, interwoven with rare jewels of patient suffering. Reflect for a moment upon what this meant for them all, particularly the one so rarely tried woman, and the picture brought before your mind will be almost a tragic one, arousing nothing short of deepest sympathy. Dorothy's parents, as before said were feeble, and though a departure for their Lakewood home was advisable, it was not to be thought of just then, time must be given to soften grief and make them realize that the discovery has been a merciful one, presenting untold misery in the future life of a noble character, a daughter so full of self sacrifice and love for them. As time wore on, Dorothy's care of her parents was so continuous as to afford her small chance for lamentation over own sad fate, but when the stillness of night brought her some respite she would lay bare before herself the occurrences of her life and sometimes caught herself questioning the justice of a God she had been taught to love and reverence. Once in the gloaming when she

descended from her car, and was strolling alone through the forest where only the chirping of birds and the ripple of a running stream were heard, she seemed to derive comfort from communing with her Maker, and the lines of many a loved poet thrust themselves upon her mind with startling force and from Burn's sentiment, "A mind conscious of integrity, scorns to say more than it can perform," she obtained solace, and returning to her car she turned her face homeward a better woman recalling what was said, "I took that which ungently came, and without scorn forgave, do thou the same," this must be her motto.

Annita was awaiting her upon her return, and as she embraced her and looked into her tearless eyes, a fear passed over her that too great suppression might eventually tell its sad tale, and she strove to make resignation more of a task with the woman she loved as well.

Through Bradley, Annita learned that the scapegrace of our story, for such it would seem he is to be, had departed for unknown climes and let us hope that he will abstain from showing the true side of his nature, so well known to his associates of his past life, where they can bring further sorrow to those who escaped him when almost too late, through the channel of honorable instincts for when it was known of his anticipated step, and matters had progressed too far to admit of a doubt, then means were resorted to, to save a young life from total wreckage, and blessed will ever be those endowed with the courage and manhood which was so dauntless as to crush temerity.

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When it was deemed prudent the father, mother and daughter departed for Lakewood accompanied by Annita, and the quiet of that sweet place with its beautiful surroundings, happily not associated with Charles, bid fair to have the most calming effect upon all three of them, so that Annita left them greatly relieved and hoping for the best, while having endeared herself more than ever, to her warm and appreciative friends.

Bradley's appearance upon the scene of action at this time had been a great surprise to Annita and as circumstances developed it was a most fortunate thing, for he was a great service in ascertaining the justice of the cruel things which came to their knowledge. The first evening when disclosures came to the family and Annita was comforting them, she was called to the telephone to hear a familiar voice saying: "Might I have the pleasure of calling for you at any hour you may appoint?" It was such a surprise that she almost succumbed, the color came and went from her face, her heart ceased to throb as it were, and with difficulty she commanded the necessary words for a reply, which did not compel a great delay in their meeting, but she preferred it should be in their own home, hence gave orders for her car to be ready in an hour's time, as earlier would have necessitated almost a cruel wrecking, and before leaving she told Dorothy the cause of her unexpected speedy departure, and promised to be with her early on the morrow. When she alighted from her car and entered the house, it was to be confronted by the man of her heart, and they only waited to be alone to let their feelings overflow.

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Anyone of us who will enter into his or herself can paint a far more realistic picture of the scene than my poor pen could ever offer. So that leaving them for hours to talk their separated lives over, and plan for the future, we will proceed to see that Bradley met with a hearty welcome from Annita's parents, and no evident desire to prolong the agony may I say that they had gone through. The following day they sought and comforted Dorothy all they could, but of course their unalloyed happiness was almost a torture to her.

CHAPTER VII

BRADLEY had seen sufficient of German life to approve of some of their customs. The one was engagement announcements (“*Verlobung Karten*”) being sent out, and he asked why that could not be done at once, thus entitling him to certain privileges, not otherwise accorded to men. For instance driving alone, attending places of amusement unchaperoned, etc., etc. The matter was freely discussed and approved of so that their calling list was taken to the engravers and the necessary instruction given that their cards might be dispersed as speedily as possible. In the meantime there was no infringement upon social regulation and they continued living up to the proper demands, until cards of congratulations began pouring in, and the wonder of the world was how such secrecy could have been maintained.

Bradley had brought from abroad a rare piece of jewelry, an heirloom in the shape of a bracelet of unusual beauty which he placed upon her arm as their binding link, and asked her not to remove it. But when it was found too elegant and inappropriate to wear at all times, the conventional ring, with its sparkling jewels of diamonds and rubies was presented with the words, when she commented upon its beauty, “Nothing is worthy of your acceptance.”

Now came the time for amusing occurrences, and old lovers got their heads together, and comparing notes, brought but the one closing sentiment, and that was that they had received no encouragement, only friendly treatment, and hence they could harbor no bitter feelings. Her friends, one and all,

sent remembrances, and were most eulogistic in their opinions regarding her selection, but ever returning to their bewilderment concerning the secrecy of their proceedings.

The following two busy months Bradley felt himself drawn each moment more closely to Annita, whose sweet character shone forth in her every action, and once he caught himself saying, "How true it is that a sweet smile is heaven's sunshine reflected in a woman's face." So constantly was the flattery poured into Bradley's ears that he wearied of it, and once remarked that Diogenes considered the most dangerous of wild animals slander; of tame ones flattery. This acted as a quietus and for a time his blushes were spared him, and life progressed smoothly and happily, while tailors, milliners, and dressmakers made their presence felt at many inopportune moments. But the feeling that this inconveniencing must be borne with for the agreeable results, resigned them to the inevitable.

It had always been Annita's heart's desire to be married in their home on the Hudson, beautiful "Benvenuta," and as they were of different religions a church wedding was not to be considered. Then again, there was more of a novelty in this, so that it was the *modus operandi* determined upon and all attention were attracted to the carrying out of the desires not easily acceded to, but coming under the head of "Where there is a will there is a way."

Although the house was a very large one, the grounds most spacious, and the surroundings beautiful, much had to be done in view of the fact that Bradley's family from Scotland was to be with them,

and several hundred guests were expected to attend. For weeks before the occasion workmen of all kinds were busy, a banqueting hall was put up on the ground adjoining the dining room, with comparative solidity, and adorned in such a way as not to look incongruous with the rest of the house. Arrangements were made for decorating the house and grounds sumptuously, and illuminating with great promise of resplendence; even the fountain was to have electric lights of various colors, artistically arranged beneath the falling waters. Nothing was to be omitted to make this an occasion to be handed down in history, as comparable to many a court entertainment, while surpassing many another.

Annita's mother had seen that the culminating of things was not far distant, and she had not let the grass grow beneath her feet but had accumulated her daughter's trousseau steadily, and now only gowns, wraps and hats were to be considered. Her wedding dress was a French creation, as well as many others, and numerous were the cases and trunks which passed through the custom house consigned to them.

We are told that all good things must come to an end, so it is with all bad ones, and now the culminating point of bliss was about to be enjoyed by them. The bridal party had been selected, Dorothy was to be her lady of honor, and there were five bridesmaids and groomsmen. They both had a sentimental feeling about being attended by none but their intimates. Bradley's brother was his best man and the remaining five were, for the most part, friends of Annita's.

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How could it be otherwise since America was not his home?

The rehearsals held at their country house were occasions of great enjoyment for them all, and when the necessary formulas had been gone through with, a round of fun and jokes was entered into, and Bradley felt himself being converted to the American customs and habits, not so distasteful now as they once were.

It was thought advisable to spend the preceding Sunday to the wedding day at Benvenuta, so they converted that oftentimes solemn day, especially with the Scotch, into one of considerable hilarity, after the rehearsal had been passed through with, and it was far into the gloaming before they reached New York, to scatter and not meet again until the memorable occasion of the wedding day.

Annita's intended carried into effect the custom of not seeing his fiancée the day prior to her marriage, which gave her greatly needed quiet, and occasion for seeing that the important gown was as perfect as it should be, and her pearls and diamond parure admirably suited to it.

Two days before the wedding he accompanied them to Benvenuta—Annita, her mother and father, not to speak of the colony of attendants—passed the night and early the next morning Bradley was off not to return until the important day of his life. Such bustle and confusion as existed from now on can only be realized by one who has had the experience.

Gifts of costly, as well as the simplest nature, (for Annita had many friends of moderate means)

virtually poured in, and one could easily appreciate that she was an idolized child.

The wedding was to be at five o'clock. All affairs were in readiness, trains provided for the guests' arrival on time, and departure after they had enjoyed the fairylike scene these arrangements presented, with their gorgeous illumination. Nothing had been forgotten and the last lonely night of her life was spent quietly with her, but sadly for her parents, who bade her more than the usual good night, and then stared the reality of things in the face with aching hearts.

We are told that the heroine of romance is the one who sitting by a still pool that lies in some forest watches calmly the placid water until she sees the face of her lover in it, and then she is satisfied. The hero is he who with aching heart searches the wide world for the maiden he must win. This is some comfort to him, but where does the solace come to those who are giving up their all, with the knowledge that they must at least share that love which was once entirely theirs. This is truly a cruel world.

At daybreak the household was aroused with a telegram to announce that an accident had happened to Bradley, who was thrown from an automobile when in company with his brother; they had been making the final arrangements for the following day's occurrence. His arm was broken and other serious injuries sustained. Then and there Annita said the wedding would take place all the same, and at his bedside the knot was tied at the expected hour, with attending coterie of loyal friends about them.

Bradley, although in great pain, strove to be

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most tranquil and appreciative of what was being done for him, while the love that beamed from his eyes for the noble choice of his life could scarcely be depicted. When they had all departed, we can fancy the tableau. Going to a suite already secured for her in the same hotel, she disrobed, laying aside her exquisite gown, and regal bridal gifts of pearls, and very soon embarked on the duties of a loving wife.

CHAPTER VIII

IT WAS a long and painful siege for both of them, and when Bradley's condition permitted he was taken to Benvenuta to recuperate and lament over the sad turn in matters, as they were just starting out in life. His parents, brother and sister, who had come to this country for the wedding, paid them a long visit in that dear spot—indeed only departed when every promise of perfect recovery was pronounced.

Now upon entering alone in this beautiful ideal place, where the fire of love was fanned by the breezes from the historic river, on which so many lovely things have been written, their honeymoon began and all thoughts of their disappointment were banished from mind.

Soon Annita realized that even her most exaggerated ideas of Bradley's character did not do him justice and, of course, her cup of happiness was more than full, while Bradley appreciated the fact that none but a noble woman would have pursued such a course of action as did Annita.

Parting must soon come but it was not a sad one, for Bradley's parents, as they realized their son had won a prize, and when they bade him goodby, he stood in all his happy manhood on the piazza of this lovely home, where pallor was the only evidence of his suffering and great shock.

As he gazed upon all the grandeur and beauty of nature about him, he said, "Annita, dear, my love for you is so great that in the past I did not realize and appreciate as I do now, nestled away in this softly cushioned chair, with you on its arm, the

quality of the air, the fragrance of the flowers, the sound of the fountain's dripping water; the chirping of the birds, and the pecking of the woodpeckers, while enjoying the vista through the sweet honeysuckle vine, the land of Andalusia about us."

Rising up before her and portraying the beauty of manhood so calculated to fill a wife's heart with love and pride, he put his arm about her, saying, "Was ever man good enough to deserve the devotion and loyalty of a noble woman?" Standing long thus they gazed upon the beautiful picture before them. A deep stillness possessed the air; the mellow of autumn, tempered by a haze, which diffused its mists over everything without. There was a faint chill in the atmosphere, and still they lingered, looking out upon the far distant hills, and across the waters of the beautiful, historic Hudson River. The picture drawn by Bradley showed his wife that he was not of a prosaic nature, but one full of that sentiment that had been the food of her soul, and with his portrayal love's fond dreams were realized, and arm in arm they entered the grand old living room, which sparkled with welcome.

It was long and spacious with a fine Dutch tile chimney, and massive andirons, supporting heavy hickory logs which were burning crisply, and throwing out cheerful light and rosin perfume. They were accompanied by no others, for it was the hour of twilight and as yet the house had not been illuminated.

When he was comfortably seated, she nestled closely to him, and looking into the burning embers, their hearts told the long and never wearing tale of love.

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Just about the hour for announcing dinner, an automobile was heard on the driveway approaching the house. Annita fled to make her evening toilet, and soon Dorothy entered accompanied by her maid who placing what was considered the pieces of value within the door, retired to the hall, but of course it was understood this was at least a night visit. After receiving Bradley's welcome Dorothy fled to Annita's room and received a hearty welcome. Before long with great excitement she related, a shock she had been subjected to, fortunately when her parents were not home, and the room containing all of the souvenirs of the unfortunate would-have-been event of her life, from some unknown cause caught on fire and its contents were destroyed, but little damage was done to the rest of the house, and her parents were at the hotel awaiting the necessary repairs, while she had fled in search of the quiet which city life fails to afford.

There are times Annita, dear, in our lives when we turn to those we love and whose sympathy we need, therefore, I have come to you, I abstain as much as possible from talk upon the painful subject with my parents, their lives must be kept as quiet as possible, and I must seem indifferent, indeed thankful for my narrow escape, which in reality I am, but it is not without its painful, mortifying sting.

As they sat about the sumptuous dinner table, Annita showed up in such picturesque beauty clad in her soft filmy robe of rose tints, not only Bradley realized what perfect happiness had done in emphasizing all her charms, but Dorothy was full of

admiration and intensified love for the picture before her.

Before retiring they played a game of cards, another guest having come by a later train, sent as a bearer of important news to Bradley, but his was not a nature to annoy others with his perplexities, so for the present the game was made a pleasant one, and later in the evening, business discussions, and important papers were gone over, with sufficient satisfaction to admit of the gentleman's return by early train on the morrow, not however, without carrying with him pleasant recollections of the delightful evening and supper of the night before, when the two beautiful women, so different in types charmed and fascinated him, as well as filled his heart with envy over the possession of his lucky friend.

While Annita's slumber was peaceful, Dorothy's was almost tearful, for how could she lose sight of the two sad episodes of her still young life. Arising with the lark, she enjoyed the beautiful vista from her window, the braying of the cattle, the mooing of the cows, the tinkling of their bells, the lovely sheep scattered over the green fields, the caretakers going to and fro in that peaceful quiet, while day had not much more than dawned, brought about calm feelings in Dorothy's mind as she gazed without, and when she descended to breakfast, edifying calmness existed, and a beautiful peaceful smile came forth from her lovely eyes.

During the day, circumstances led up to Annita's telling her friend that while the blow had seemed a cruel one, it was certainly an evidence of God's love for her, and that was the way she must think of it.

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Bradley was still too unwell to take upon himself the business duties of life, which he longed to do, as indeed does every man, but his brain was not a sluggish one, and his future life and plans received their share of his thought, though his condition made his life inactive.

Benvenuta deserved to be considered fairy land, for it was indeed so. The walks, the drives, the scenery from any point of view could not be too beautifully portrayed. Nature had done worlds for it, and the hands of men, guided by taste and elaborate expenditure of money, had done all else, making upon the whole, something as worthy of being gazed upon, as the most noted of European palatial gardens, and viewed by all countrymen in rapturous delight.

As things were then, the movements of Dorothy were veiled in uncertainty, and a speedy return to the city, and her parents was what she most desired. The veritable holocaust, one might say, had shocked her friends and established in their minds a state of wonderment over the result of this first step. It would seem a warning that all must be forgotten, and the chapter of a new life opened up. Many went far enough to say that a great calamity had been averted, for which all should be most thankful.

About this time a charming cousin of Annita, as sweet and attractive as her name, Louise, was left homeless by the demise of a widowed mother, and it fell to Annita's parents to befriend her, presumably for the time being, and so startlingly beautiful a girl of 18 could not fail to make her mark in the world of New York also before many a day, but sometimes

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in no sense, the result of inexperienced such as small towns afford leads to rapid disclosures of startling characteristics, as was the case in this instance, but we will resume this later.

CHAPTER IX

WHEN it was considered safe for Bradley to resume his business duties a return to the city and her parents' beautiful home which was theirs without intrusion, her parents being in the land of sunshine, flowers and fruits, California, from whence they wrote charming descriptive letters of their surroundings, the Yosemite, the big trees, the Presidio where gallant troops pleased the eye with their shining buttons and well cared for uniforms; such military manœuvres, and inspiring music as fills the hearts of ladies with perfect contentment, and makes the passerby ready to become a vivandier at first sound of fife or drum announcing war's preliminaries.

Peace and happiness followed Bradley and Annita, but how long this was to continue in the hollow atmosphere of New York society, was a problem. To live quietly, unless isolated from society, was soon found a monstrous task, and little by little heartless glamour shone forth in their lives, as well as those of their friends, eating most seductively into their clean hearts, with the same ruinous effects as the wormwood amongst the sweet plants. At first each was radiantly happy over the success of the other, when lo! the spirit of a divided interest was creeping into their hearts unawares to them. Now it came to pass that Annita for maternal reasons was forced to seclude herself for the time being, and a return of beautiful peace and confidence reigned again supremely within them, and brought to mind the question only aroused by the picture of the present and the immediate past. Is it not hol-

low and devoid of all that brings true happiness.

When the bright morning came which bestowed upon them the anxiously watched for little creature destined to complete their bliss, and the nurse announced a fine bouncing boy, great was the father's pride, and mother's regret that it was not a girl. But as is ever the case, it was soon pronounced just what they wanted, and Bradley's devotion was only equalled by that of his ever loving and tender wife. When he visited her and saw her reclining amongst soft, pink silk, lace bedecked pillows, and correspondingly lovely negligee, with natural ringlets falling about her face, he felt that never could a lovelier picture be beheld, and when his confidence in his own manhood made him assert himself capable of holding his boy in his arms, and he stood proudly at her side, the nurse was forced to admit it was a lovely tableau; while her parents were glad to behold it.

CHAPTER X

AS ANNITA recovered rapidly, it was not long before a promise of a return to the recent manner of living stared them in the face, and with injunctions for himself and warnings for her, there seemed to be the means of avoiding pitfalls. But alas, for poor human nature in an atmosphere of allurements!

Annita's maternal step had added greatly to her charm and she was more beautiful than ever, collecting about herself innumerable admirers; but as of yore the one person seen to outrival all others, a certain Gervaine was filling the minds of people with ideas of watching the denouement that this unfortunate procedure would bring to light.

Bradley's faith in his wife was complete and while he knew his little attentions were of no significance, as no woman equaled his wife, it was not exactly the same with her. Adulation had stimulated pride in the fact that she felt her power with men and held full sway over them.

About this time a return to Scotland was of vital importance to Bradley, and as the stay was to be of short duration, she was to remain at home with her son, Bradley, Jr., in the home of her love-blinded parents, which was to prove the unfortunate step of his life, as Gervaine warmed up to the occasion and jeopardized the name of this harmless, but vain, woman by showing her the depth of his love, and losing no opportunity of being with her at all hours, and far too many places.

He was handsome, clever, fascinating, and all the women were ready to fall victims to his charms,

which made Annita feel the power of her fascination, losing no occasion to show their full force. Operas, theaters, functions of all kinds, long day as well as night strolls; automobile excursions, etc., etc., were indulged in.

One evening a tire demanding attention caused them to go to a wayside restaurant to refresh themselves and await the completion of a work which would have been tiresome to witness. At this place they were seen by friends, who ripe with gossip, soon caused the air to be full of interesting stories, which no power on earth could convince people were slander, and no atom of criminality could justly be attached to this poor, foolish inexperienced woman's behavior. But appearances were against her, and Gervaine indifferent for himself, was little enough to be unscrupulous about any web of entanglement he might be the cause of forming about her.

This circumstance had its most unfortunate effect upon their future lives, when her loyalty to Bradley was questioned, and his unfairly-dealt-with, manly instincts and behavior rudely handled. Naught of a criminal nature could be proven, nor could full confidence be ever restored, which caused a slow drifting apart, and encouraged the New York condition of things to be indulged in by them both. But Bradley told her that if the honor of his name was ever compromised, the effect would be of a startling nature, and the world would not soon forget it.

Gervaine continued in the role of admirer, doing nothing culpable, for Bradley, though apparently unobserving, was oblivious of nothing, yet there was

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that in his behavior which was reprehensible, and the husband shook him well upon one occasion asking for an explanation of his maneuvers, which was not given; but a vessel taken for Europe shortly thereafter, upon which the same Gervaine was chastised for trickery and gambling, which caused him to fall into such disfavor that he was not again heard from.

The shock of all this brought Annita to a realization of the ignominy of the whole affair, when she begged her husband's forgiveness, as well as that he should take her to Scotland to live. A retreat under these circumstances would have been an acknowledgment of his faith in the stories concerning his wife, which was far from his idea of his own self-respect, and the consideration due their child, so that apparently all was most serene, but the reinstatement in her husband's good favor was a slow procedure; perchance, but for the chagrin of the parents, might never have taken place.

Weary of the slow progress in obtaining the now highly prized loss, Annita sought comfort in the love bestowed upon her child, but her health weakened under the blow, and before anyone realized it, she began to waste away, and then her husband's heart was really touched, and he took her to Aix le Bains, following the physicians' orders. There, too, he became an ill man, and under this condition of things Louise was sent for thinking she would be a comfort to them, while reaping advantages for herself.

But Charles had so engrossed her attentions, while embittering his was-to-have-been wife's life, that she rather demurred to the offer made her, which

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led to Annita's parents discovering the cause of it and giving her choice of relinquishment of him, and acceptance of her friends' offer, or abandonment of her on their part. The latter she accepted, and was soon adrift upon the world, causing untold unhappiness in more families than one.

Upon hearing of Annita's state of health, Dorothy hastened to her, never having believed the gossip that was afloat. The meeting of the two friends of days gone by was pathetic, but Dorothy soon discovered that there, too, follies had made their inroads upon happiness, and her own heart softened and made her long to be the cause of a perfect reconciliation between them. This was no small undertaking and when finally effected, Annita's wish was to return to Benvenuta, where they had both spent their happiest days.

Bradley's manhood was greatly crushed, and when they were alone it was seen that his proud spirit was robbed of its characteristics of old, leaving him less joyous, though in public the change evinced was assigned to his ill health, which all thought would soon be restored. Not so with his poor regretful wife, who became daily more feeble, and it would seem was wilting like a flower. United understanding between two souls is what is called "simpatica," and it would seem this no longer existed. Both of them were suffering, the one from disappointment, the other from remorse.

Benvenuta was even more beautiful than ever before to Bradley, who had not appreciated it when seen before at that season, for the foliage was of every imaginable hue, from the darkest to the light-

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est golden shades, the darkest to the lightest red shades, with green interspersed; the pine trees holding their own, and filling the air with their delicious perfume; the atmosphere so clear and bright that one's lungs were filled with buoyancy and expanding the chest was a joy.

Bradley was again called abroad on business and the parting with his wife was very sad, contrasting as it did with their first separation when confidence had never been shaken. He did not realize what it meant to her in her penitent condition, but when he saw his beautiful boy, with his fine brown eyes and golden ringlets, nestled away on his mother's bosom, he stood gazing tenderly at the picture, and putting his arms about them was his farewell as he left the room with tearful eyes. His absence was to be of short duration, but circumstances lengthened it, and during that time Annita sank gradually into a state of such indifference that her family became alarmed, and her physician was most watchful, for he feared the worst.

Bradley's return was accompanied by the most painful shock, for the change in her had been very great and now his heart went out to her in deepest sympathy, for he realized what she must have suffered, and struggling with his manhood, he dismissed everyone and cared most tenderly for her himself, with the result that her sweetness soon won him back, and her sorrowing soul was laid before him. Often would he bring his boy to her room, the windows of which looked out on the beautiful Hudson River, and numerous lovely homes spotted here and there through the trees, and there they would sit

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quietly together while his heart was full to overflowing with dread of what was coming.

The cry of two aching hearts was a silent, but suffering one, the tale of which would not last long, and Bradley, at least, felt the warning. At twilight one evening when Annita was resting peacefully with her head upon her husband's shoulder, and the tree toads and crickets were making the hour throb with their tiny lives, Bradley dwelt long upon their married life, with its happy and sad phases, until unconsciously a tear rolled down his cheek and rested upon the brow of his wife, the woman he so dearly loved, and now felt he must soon part with. That fevered drop had awakened her, but she remained quiet, dwelling upon the suffering she had caused the only man she had ever loved, and yet trifled with, and when the room was entered to be lit up, she it was who said, "No, no, leave us as we are." It was a case of

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."

As is frequently the case, her physicians recommended a change of climate, but she begged to be allowed to remain where she was, and under the tender care of her fond husband, devoted parents, and loving friend Dorothy, the light of her soul went peacefully out after a lingering illness, during which time the beauty of that character which had been so misled by the frivolities of a fashionable life, were laid bare before her loving and disconsolate hus-

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band, whose generous heart made him forget and forgive any pangs she had ever caused him.

As the end drew near, her beautiful boy was a pleasure to her, and the picture of the two together was not soon to be forgotten.

One day she said to her husband, “I ask you to make me no promises, my dear, about our son, for I have every confidence in you, but if it is ever your wish—for you are still a young man—to marry again, think of Dorothy, and you may learn to love her, the woman that I know would make a good mother to my child.”

CHAPTER XI

WHEN Death's cruel angel had passed over their home, carrying away its treasure, broken hearts were left behind, none more keenly so than that of Bradley, who, after she was laid away in her peaceful grave, so beautifully covered with the flower of her liking—La France rose—returned to Benvenuta alone, where he lived over in keenest suffering their lives from the first hour he had met her there, during the days of the house party, when she was so radiantly beautiful in all her purity and innocence; each spot visited by them together was again sought, and all the recollections brought back to mind, not the least of them, when for only a few moments they had stood at the side of the beautiful fountain, around which swam graceful swans gliding beneath the spray of the cascade, and where looking into the windows of each other's soul love's pleasing tale was told to the satisfaction of both of them, when Charles coming to them had caused him to relinquish his right, in fulfillment of her wishes.

Each spot associated with them, either within or without the premises, was hallowed in his memory and never would be forgotten, and was gone over each day with the keenest grief. The room in which she had passed away was his own, and hovering over her bed his whole soul was poured out, as that of only a true, noble man could be.

The last night of his stay in Benvenuta (for he felt he could never see it again), was passed in trying to map out his future shattered life in a way that would be pleasing to the idol of his heart, and when on the morrow he bade farewell to it all, his

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manhood was almost overpowered, and when he reached his child in New York, it was to present the appearance of a broken, hopeless man. Intense as was the grief of her parents, great was their sympathy for him, whose only solace seemed to be derived from the love he bestowed upon his child.

Dorothy, true to her word, was tender and attentive to the little fellow as she could be, for her own mother and father's condition was far from one of resignation, and her care of them was greatly needed, not to speak of her own sufferings.

In due course of time Bradley was called to Scotland on business, and his wish was to take his boy along with Elise, his mother's maid, who had begged for the care of her mistress' child, and it was granted her, never to be regretted, as she was always devoted to him. After due consideration it was deemed wiser not to take so young a child so far from home. Even Elise, pining for La Belle France, her home, did not allow herself to be influenced, but was governed by her better judgment, and father and child were parted for two very long months to Bradley.

Upon his return the child had been very ill, and Dorothy had stood bravely, where feeling and fulfillment of promise had kept her, though under trying circumstances; for jealousy, so dominant in the French character, had almost barred her from care of any kind for the child already so dear to her.

Bradley soon discovered the state of things and with his straightforward nature, brought Elise to a comprehension of her duties, and a realization that hers was a position of yielding and not ruling, even

though intense love—for she did worship the child—existed.

Dorothy's duties to her parents were onerous, notwithstanding her love for them, for they were old, and as is often the case with the aged, exacting; so that it was a constant struggle to meet approvingly with their requirements. Wealth brings many comforts, but not always forbearance with the inevitable, such as impaired health, and poor Dorothy, who had her own humiliating heartaches, for she knew of the repellent life Charles was leading, had but poor compensation for her self-sacrifice and endurance.

Louise, with her wonderful beauty, was widely known of, and not content with ruining the life of one man, was the means of bringing unhappiness to many a household. Dorothy was proud and had loved Charles dearly, so that she felt crushed, humiliated, indeed it would seem the blight upon her life would prove everlasting.

About this time her parents determined to seek improvement of health abroad, and visited all along the line of beautiful Riviera. First they went to Monte Carlo, Dorothy thinking the diversion offered there would be of more service to her parents than doctoring. The winter had been unusually severe in New York, interminous perspective of snow burdened days, raw, cold damp air and very little sunshine, which was depressive as well as house binding.

Settled there in all comfort and luxury, Dorothy determined upon leading a life of usefulness with a line of study, which would rest her mind from sad recollection, and afford her an excuse for not enter-

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ing into the vortex of dissipation, which is encountered there; for she knew of some friends who had preceded them to that spot, and most likely would be offering inducements for a relaxation from a life of sorrow and disappointments. She felt herself capable of resisting temptation, but time proved that the allurements of society were great, and that one slight influence ran into numberless others, for which she would excuse herself by saying they were the means of dispelling sad memories for the present, but never would ripen into absolute frivolity. Time proved that they were on the verge of doing so, for she clustered about herself a group of admiring friends, to say the least, and but for a guiding hand extended her she might have become a victim to another pitfall.

CHAPTER XII

AFTER her departure, not only little Bradley, but his father, had a sense of having lost a link from the chain of love, the boy missing the tender caresses that an affectionate friend (to him far more, but not fully comprehended) bestowed; the father a congenial spirit, who knowing his life, could be opened unto.

As the heat of summer was closing in upon them, the New York grandparents suggested the advisability of a change for the child, and he was taken to his grandparents in beautiful Scotland, the land of lassies, where in the highlands he passed months learning to love those who doted upon him, and would gladly have kept him.

As time wore on, Bradley in search of diversion, found his way to Monte Carlo, where Dorothy and her parents gave him a warm welcome in their apartments in the Hotel de Paris; but the life there had no charms for him, frivolities bringing forcibly to mind the cause of his sorrows, when his cup of bliss was almost full; and he expressed a wish to drive off into the woods with Dorothy, who gladly consented.

The day was beautiful, heaven seemed to have unfolded its loveliness in the clear blue sky, she was serenely mistress of the situation, though conscious of the fact that Bradley's friendly feelings had prompted him to put before her mind sheer facts, which he was confident she had not realized. A sense of imprudence had long caused her self-reproach, for she was leading more than one of her admirers into dangerous paths, but the delight afforded an attractive woman, caused by the adula-

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tion bestowed upon her, was pleasing though she knew it was like playing with fire.

After conversing upon the occurrences of the day, and more than once giving her an insight into his bereaved life, he led gradually up to hers, asking if the present was contrasting pleasantly with the past. He saw her shudder and then remain silent for the moment, when turning moist eyes upon him she said, "Why do you ask me this?"

His reply was, "My wife's love for you has made me wish to shield you from that which will only add to your misery for time and eternity."

"But what am I to do with myself?" said she. "I am still young, and distractions are necessary for my very life."

"But need they, perforce, be cruel and unprincipled ones?"

By this time they had reached a little mountain stream, by which he allowed his horse to graze, and they descended from the trap to admire the silvery looking fish so happy and free in their graceful motions, in and out of the small recesses caused by Nature's well-provided place of retreat. The rustling of the leaves, the sighing of the winds, the splashing of the waters, made the spot a romantic one, and Dorothy felt the pulsations of her heart quicken, while Bradley's manhood only pointed to the fact that he must guard this thoughtless woman, so beloved by his wife, from her own imprudent self.

"Dorothy," he said, "with youth much is pardoned, but ripe years are not mercifully dealt with. Consider this and reflect if your course of action is not subjecting you to harsh criticism. I have been

observing you, yea, even before you were aware of my presence, and it is my opinion that your charms are making inroads upon the hearts of men. The Captain, for instance—a noble valiant man, I am told; if you are conceiving for him an especial liking, so let it be. If not, let me beg of you in the role of honor, to change your manner of action before your behavior becomes reprehensible, and painful to those interested in your standing.

“Walter, while the most pleasing to woman’s fancy, I cannot believe is really interesting to you, but he adds to the list of your followers and pleases your vanity. His personal appearance, his manners, his birth, all go to make him one of the men sought after, but you must not frivol your life away to drown disappointment or arouse jealousy. I do not wish to assume an air of proprietorship with you (whereupon his face suffused with blushes), but I do wish to protect you, if you will allow me, while showing my gratitude for what you have been to my dear ones, if nothing more.”

Dorothy expressed her appreciation of his kindness, and their drive home was a quiet one, full of reflection to each of them. He bade her a hearty farewell and took the night train for his home in Scotland.

That night Dorothy excused herself from fulfilling an engagement to attend a dance at the Casino, and in the quiet of her own room, with her head bowed and resting upon folded arms, over the center table, upon which the shadows of a burning lamp, with exquisite colors, danced and played, she felt the throbbing of her heart. She questioned the wis-

dom of her present course, while approving of the warning of the one to whom she felt herself for the first time more than usually drawn. As the minutes bubbled and dipped from the old grandfather clock, she said to herself, "Things that are true, are often blue," and with well conceived ideas of her future course of action, she sought night's slumbers, which only came to her after much tossing.

The following day she was to be one of a large dinner party given at the Hotel de Paris by the Captain, really in her honor, and it was upon this occasion that the Captain for the first time questioned the power of his attractiveness for her, and was compelled to believe that some unknown cause was responsible for so palpable and sudden a change. Dorothy was not versed in the guiles of society, which would have taught her to use her rod, playing more deftly and long with finds ere she scattered them to the winds.

The entertainment was a grand one, chaperoned by the Captain's sister, a woman of standing in her Tennessee home, Mrs. Orloff, who was charming and devoted to her brother. When the Captain escorted Dorothy home and questioned her closely he received the unsatisfactory reply that they would shortly be obliged to depart from Monte Carlo, and that she had been annoyed. His was a feeling good night; hers a thoughtful one.

The following day brought her a veritable love note, of such a sentimental nature that Dorothy was made to realize the truth of Bradley's warnings, and to hesitate long before replying to it. Indeed many notes were destroyed before she had written one to

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her satisfaction, and that one made her recall the following lines:

“If the hidden sorrows of each of us,
Were written on our brow,
How many of those who are envied,
Would win our pity now?”

For she was far from happy, and hoped Walter, who had been somewhat upon a par with the Captain in his attentions, would not be encouraged to fancy himself anything more than a friend; and quite likely he would not be, for he was a decided ladies' man, fluttering like a moth about a candle, around each newcomer with a pretty face.

The Captain was chagrined over her note, but being a man of the world, accepted the situation calmly, though with deep regret, and did not make himself obnoxious when they met by referring to it.

True to her word, Monte Carlo was soon abandoned for Mentone, where the climate was ideal and she settled down to a life calculated to be more productive of satisfactory results, in the Hotel de Rome. There she found herself thinking frequently of little Bradley, and not unfrequently of his father.

Upon one occasion when she was wandering from shop to shop, as tourists always do, she chanced to be attracted by a beautiful peasant doll, dressed in the costume of the Canton, and she yielded to the temptation of selecting one to send to this “love of a child,” as she always called him, which was despatched with a few loving lines to the little fellow, and its receipt was acknowledged by the father in truly grateful style.

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When fall had set in and the knowledge that home heat had passed away, Bradley returned to New York with his son, and nurse, Elise, all of whom were welcomed by the grandparents, who had taken especial pains in having the walls of his playroom freshly decorated with nursery rhymes and pictures which could not fail to delight him. He was a lovely boy, only so like his mother that it was a living sorrow to them all; not only in his looks, but in all of his little ways; and Bradley often wished that he had been a girl—which is not frequently the case with a man. But his feeling was that as a girl his wife would have been brought back to him even more forcibly.

In the vortex of business Bradley soon found respite from the sting that still pricked, and often his thoughts would revert to the wish that his wife had expressed about Dorothy, for he was a domestic man and the word home was full of meaning to him. Sometimes he sent friendly letters to Dorothy, and his heart was full of appreciation of the fact that his warnings had been heeded, and that she had turned a cold shoulder upon frivolities, evinced by the tone of her responses.

It was deemed advisable for her parents to remain in that soft, balmy climate during the winter months, which was a disappointment to Dorothy, but borne courageously. She thought the Adirondacks would answer as well, but no voice could equal that of the physicians, though penetration would show one that self-advancement had much to do with it. The star of grandeur and prestige has aroused envy in many, but not in all. Some writer said, "Obedience to the law is the light of the soul." Remem-

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bering this, Dorothy yielded, but never felt influenced by a grandeur and prestige of selfish motives.

Cannes on the Mediterranean, was the resort most highly recommended to them, and there they established themselves in rooms overlooking the sea, and between salt baths; driving along its borders; inhaling that balmy air; partaking of the fresh fruits; just culled from the trees, with such aroma as we never enjoy; and being delighted by the view of lovely cottages studded along the foot of the mountains, their illumination at night presenting the scene of fairyland; the air laden with the perfume of such flowers as are seldom seen; they improved daily and began to talk of returning home in the spring—not to open up their New York home, but the one at Lakewood.

CHAPTER XIII

I FIND myself from rapid flow of ideas passing over some of the sweetest of my recollections concerning Bradley. On the second anniversary of his dear wife's demise, he went alone to the cemetery to visit her grave, carrying with him especially ordered La France roses, and as he approached the sad spot, he remarked a tall, heavily laden bush of her favorites at the head of the grave, with branches overspreading it, and the perfume of the flowers brought forth such painful as well as happy remembrances, that kneeling alone with his hand outstretched upon it, the tears streamed down his face, and he recalled first the pleasures of his life with her, then the sufferings, and finally their tender parting, with promises to bury all pain connected with her, while living in the atmosphere of their first love, never to be forgotten.

Gazing upon this beautiful growing rose he wondered whose hand had placed it there, and not until long after ascertained that Charles had done so during his absence. But the secret was not to be divulged, and he respected his wishes, but found himself pitying him, as evidently Annita was his sole and only love. Perchance, with her his life would not have been wasted, and the world's scorn not have been his share of life's offerings.

The sight of this bush filled his mind with many and varied conjectures, but it was strange that even cold and frost had very little effect upon its continued flourishing, which told his heart that if angels had carried her away, so they would ever preside over that earthly abode of hers, and a certain in-

spiration warned him would remain as it was when taken away, unchanged by the vicissitudes of time.

Bradley watched with great and almost jealous interest this rose without a thorn, and speaking to himself would say, "How strange that the one who almost nipped my happiness in the bud, and the one who did worse to Dorothy, should with me thus be united, over the last resting place of the idol of both of us living mortals."

When Dorothy returned from abroad, Bradley asked her to accompany him to the cemetery, and when she consented, with rather grewsome feelings, for a cemetery had always been a spot she wanted to shun, in this instance it was entirely different.

They went to it both in a solemn mood, and when they entered the gate his inclination was to tell her what they would soon see, but he refrained, and on the very spot itself everything was explained to Dorothy, who listened with tearful eyes, and taking her to a rustic seat not far off he told her of Annita's wishes and asked her how she felt about aiding him in carrying them out.

A long silence followed, in which both went over their past lives, and neither saw a way to make a change without deliberate reflection. Kneeling at the side of the grave, they asked their loved one to guide them and give them her blessing, that they might not err in their final step. Each culled a green leaf from the bush, he placing his with the picture in his locket, she pressing hers beneath the leaves of a small pocketbook. Thus they left the spot in most reflective mood, and returned home, having said but little. When he parted with her at

her door, her face was pale and the lines of care deeper than he had ever seen them, and no doubt, as sad a tale was told by his.

After a cup of tea, she sought the quiet of her room in the Waldorf—for they were only passing through New York—and he was glad to feel that he could, at the club, retire to himself and be alone with his own sad questioning thoughts, as long as he chose; for men are not disposed to intrude upon each other's privacy when they withdraw to a corner.

He did not wish to return home in his present frame of mind, but a moderate drink, a man's balm, composed him, and soon he was viewing life from the practical standpoint. After due deliberation he sat and poured out his manly feelings in writing to the woman he was now offering the highest position in his life, namely, that of becoming his wife and the mother to his boy, who had always loved her, and needed a mother's affection and care.

He began by saying, "We must both admit that life is a problem at best, and then we must ask ourselves if we are capable of solving it, providing for ourselves the best means of making it a healthy and happy Christian one. If we feel that we are, nothing is left to do but grasp the reins of life that are thrown out to us, and steer along the lines before us, with honor and love as our guiding stars. I could not tell you, Dorothy, that I had never loved before, for that would be false to my wife's memory, as well as to my manhood, but I can say that I will give you all that was not bestowed upon her, and that my loyalty shall be ever beyond reproach, and that if my fondness for you did not satisfy me that what

I could give you would make you happy, I should not risk embittering your life as well as my own.

From you I ask no trying avowals. Your past is dear, as well as sad to you; so is mine to me. But if you think me capable of dispelling clouds and substituting for them sunshine and happiness, it will not only be removing darkness and desolation from yourself, but acceding to the wishes of my child's mother.

We have both passed the age of filling pages with love's fond dreams; they must be substituted by promises pondered over and lived up to, for our own happiness and that of all associated with us.

If your reply, dear woman, is what I pray it may be, I shall extend to your parents that respect and attention they are entitled to, by asking for their approval; then I shall impose upon myself the painful task of asking the blessings of my poor dear wife's parents, while telling them I am following the wishes of their own child.

Come what may, I shall always be your warm and grateful friend, Bradley."

This despatched he drove home where he fondled and amused his baby boy until time to dress for dinner. At that repast he learned what he should have known during the day, but for his own disturbed condition of feeling, namely, that there had been almost a panic in the stock market and that great excitement had existed on 'change. His ignorance of the condition of things forced him to admit he had had his own troubles, which bereft him of business sense, and to hasten from the table in quest of his partner. Theirs was stocks and bonds business car-

ried on between a Scotland and New York house, for the most part, and they were houses of the best repute and successful standing.

His father-in-law abstained from telling the fears of business men concerning the two houses, and it was only when Halstead, his partner, was reached that the true condition of things was understood, making Bradley, himself, very apprehensive.

It was Friday, and Saturday was a very anxious day for everyone, not closing business as was the custom at noon, but far into the night, sending many home with anxious hearts to suffer from during the Sabbath day.

Upon reaching home late Saturday, Bradley received an answer to his letter from Dorothy, which he carried to his apartments, not stopping, as was his custom, in his child's room; first absent-mindedness, then the wee hours prevented it. Mopping the perspiration from his brow, he held the letter for some time in his fingers, asking himself if this was to be another test of his feelings and manhood.

Just then his father-in-law called to him to know what the latest news was. His reply was, "Things do not look very promising with me, but are not as hopeless as at first appearances," and bidding him good night he withdrew to his desk and tore open the note, perfumed with violets and orris root, which began, "Dear Bradley," and continued in a most happy strain, saying that she felt flattered by the honor paid her and her first impulse was to accede to his wish in full, but her experience had been such a sad one, that she begged for more time to consider all points before doing that which would, perhaps,

jeopardize the happiness of both of them, and winding up with the hope that he was not suffering from the panic. "Of course you will write me, and I shall you, saying when I shall be glad to have you come to me at Lakewood, for which place we leave on the Monday noon train. Until we meet, yours sincerely, Dorothy."

Reaching the depot at stated time Monday, flowers and a note awaited her. He had no disposition to intrude and would await her summons, besides which, business matters demanded his attention. The times were most strenuous for a few days and at the expiration of them Bradley felt that he had been amongst the sufferers, but he was a rich man outside of his business, and had always been prudent, which Scotch instincts make a man, so that he soon rallied.

Some days elapsed before he heard from Dorothy, and then it was to ask him to come to them at Lakewood, bringing Bradley, Jr. He replied, "Will hasten to you, but not to remain at your house, for reasons which will be satisfactory to you. Expect me at four p. m. Tuesday."

And when he arrived she met him cordially on the comfortably arranged veranda of their palatial cottage, for even then there were hours, in the middle of the day especially, when this glass enclosure was lovely and sunny. Be it remembered this was early spring, and with the palms, singing birds and aquarium, she thought it a most lovely spot to receive him in.

As she advanced, a snow white spaniel, with a blue ribbon tied about its neck, sprang forward with

a bark of welcome. Tea was served and then their hearts led them up to the subject dearest to them, and before he left her, a happy understanding existed, and he was to call upon her parents the following day, bringing with him his beautiful boy, but leaving Elise behind, deeming discretion the better part of valor.

Dorothy paved the way for his coming with her parents, who were not greatly surprised—indeed rather pleased—for the thought of leaving her unprotected, and they realized they were feeble, caused them great solicitude; for though she had a brother by the name of Arthur, his early manhood had been so painful to them that he was encouraged to go west, after having taken the risky step of allying himself with a noted French danceuse, by the name of Hortense Declat.

An effort was made to eradicate him from their lives after having agreed to a handsome yearly remittance. Dorothy was young when he left home, and with never a mention of him he soon passed out of her life. As is seldom the case, this danceuse developed unexpected traits, became the mother of two fine children and for years led a happy life. But murder will out, and the natural instincts could not continue suppressed, so she ran off to New York under an assumed name, and was soon running the gauntlet with Charles, the same who had wearied of Louise's charms, or at least wanted variety; and Arthur returned home, a much changed man, not knowing up to this time that New York was her place of selection.

After many weeks of great anxiety as to how

these little ones should be disposed of, a widowed cousin of small means was selected to preside over his modest home and do the required duties, and he buckled down to work, hoping to redeem himself in the confidence and love of his parents. His appearance on the horizon occurred just at this time and Dorothy was compelled to ask Bradley to defer seeing her parents until a more propitious time.

Bradley prolonged his stay for a few days in Lakewood, that he might be with Dorothy and see her as her own natural self, for there had always been a certain amount of restraint between them, caused by conjectures about them and their futures. The day before he departed he dined at their cottage, "Edelweis," meeting again the parents, and for the first time the brother, who notwithstanding his bravado manner, had a good face, and was most familiar with the far West, carrying them even to the distance of Pike's Peak, in his descriptions, and elaborations upon a life he had grown to love.

Baby Bradley came to them for dessert, Elise remaining in the maids' hall until leave taking took place, when the automobile bore the three away, after a most decorous parting between the two. Baby's clinging to her was thought only natural, as he had been a part of her life since his mother's death.

Returning to the house, Arthur's admiration for the man was expressed by the ejaculation, "Say, I call that a bully fine man," which caused Dorothy to smile and hide her blushes by looking far away through the windows, and saying they certainly had lovely weather for the trip.

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She went to her home, sat down, and a calm, peaceful feeling came to her while she said to herself, "I am sure that I have made no mistake this time," and allowing her thoughts to drift, she fell asleep and had refreshing dreams, which caused her to awaken with the beautiful expression upon her face which only perfect contentment impresses there.

The following day was spent in sweet composure with her, and in quiet contentment with him, as he had no reason to doubt the sanction of Annita's parents when notified of the selection of a mother for their grandchild, in particular as they knew their daughter's heart's wish. But still, uncertainty is always a disturbing element. However, his was not a cringing nature, rather one to take the bull by the horns, if inelegance of expression be tolerated. That evening while the two gentlemen were smoking, and his mother-in-law sat back in state, amid cushions of greatest elegance, he broached the subject, without noticing much surprise, and at the termination of his narrative, they both gave him an approving smile, adding that Dorothy would always find in them the truest friends and that they had heard on all sides stories which prevented this causing them any amazement. When he left them that evening, it was to kiss her and shake his hand warmly in grateful appreciation of their generosity.

Going from them he went to his child's room and sat long at the side of the crib, seeming to commune with his mother, to whom he had given the devoted and fresh love of youth; the loyalty of noble manhood; the adoration of advancing years; all of which had been nipped in the bud, leaving him with a

bleeding heart, to be sure, but ultimately making him love more tenderly than ever, for pity crowned it, and censure always rested with others, making her ever the idol that would never be shattered.

He left the room with these words upon his lips, "What is comparable to a woman's soul, and that she gave me in all its purity, only to have the world's falseness rob me of it; and her own noble heart return it when the fire of remorse and repentance had made her suffer unto death. Then how can I love another as I did her? Never; but my truthful tale has been told Dorothy and I will live up to all of my promises, giving her fidelity and her future life all that the past has lacked in. Aristotle said that passions are habits of the mind and can be gotten rid of, as physical habits are gotten rid of, but I differ with him, and yet dare not argue against him."

Letters were exchanged between Bradley and Dorothy, containing the usual sentiments, if not more, for tried hearts are often more outreaching. In due course of time he was asked to return to Lakewood, which he did, and his interview with her parents was most gratifying and complimentary. Then the question of a time being set for the wedding was discussed, and it was determined it should take place most quietly upon her return to the city along in the early winter, and that they should plan later for their wedding trip, which should be in a different direction from all past ones, and not long enough to cause her parents unhappiness, nor his child's grandparents' anxiety. While seeking their own happiness, they must ever consider that of others.

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About this time Arthur discovered that Hortense, under the name of Florice, had returned to her old life of danseuse, and was sharing Charles' attentions with Louise, whose voice made her prominent amongst connoisseurs. At first his contempt for the man almost his brother-in-law was supreme, but ultimately disgust possessed him and utter indifference followed for the trio that had figured amongst clean, honest people and descended to the lowest level, compelling all to hope that no chance would ever throw them together again, while heroic efforts would be made to banish them from mind.

"Man's life, birth and death turn upon woman as upon a hinge," I have heard it said, and if this be the case, how much more responsibility rests with us, and how ceaseless should be our efforts to ennoble ourselves.

Before Dorothy and family returned to New York, numerous and pleasant were the trips Bradley made to Lakewood, where driving out into the woods and culling wild flowers at the water's edge; star gazing and all lovers' diversions were indulged in; but not with the gush of extreme youth—only in the thoughtful appreciation brought about by greater demureness and more lasting enjoyment.

CHAPTER XIV

IT WAS well into October when they returned to New York, and they planned to be in home for Christmas, so that all was astir in Dorothy's home, and old Eliza, her nurse from childhood up, and now her maid, was lamenting that age would deny her the privilege of accompanying them. But Russell, a valet of historic standing, was allowing himself to fancy that as he had once proven of great service to the family on a foreign tour, Mr. Bradley might think favorably of him. Not so, for these two sensible people had resolved that simplicity would teach them more reliance upon each other, and greater confidence in one another. It was to be a veritable case of "two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one."

Their marriage could not have been more quiet: Her family, his family and even his baby boy were present, with a handful of intimate friends. Her wish was to be married in traveling costume, but this idea was distasteful to everyone and she compromised on the French style for widows, namely, a delicate grey, which was made in exquisitely beautiful style and became her perfectly, bringing out every line of her beauty and making her the loveliest of brides; and though supremely happy, her face was like his, attractive from the fact that the stamp of deep thought was upon it, denoting that the seriousness of the step had not been overlooked.

A beautiful and sumptuous breakfast was served by New York's first caterer, and the house was decorated with pretty, rare flowers, not in profusion—that she had passed through and did not wish to re-

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peat it. Her presents were lovely—not numberless, as they had been in the first instance. Every effort was made to avoid ostentation, and his present to her was a diamond sunburst of great beauty, which was her sole ornament when married. Her engagement ring was of sapphires and diamonds,—lovely stones, but not at all startling.

When the friends had departed she kissed her little son, who was taken home by his father, then re-pairing to her room donned the traveling gown, which while most elegant was in no wise noticeable, and then the domestics came to bid her goodby and a happy return, with such feeling as indicated their fondness and respect for her.

Arthur had hung about her, losing no opportunity of showing his love, and when the parents, son and daughter were alone, he was most tender, all going to show that he felt if he had acted differently, her life might have been happier and that of all of them fraught with less humiliation and self-sacrifice. He plead for her sisterly love and she was ever happy in having granted it him.

Shortly after Bradley was back in traveling attire, and they departed in the most quiet way in their automobile for the steamer, which was to heave anchor the following day, at as an early hour as possible. Beautiful flowers adorned their cabin, the best of the vessel, but in these days of lavish bestowal of plants, this signified nothing, and the ocean was almost crossed before anything occurred to leave them open to the suspicion of being bride and groom.

The following morning they were well under way

before many of the passengers arrived on deck. It was bright, beautiful, clear, really heavenly, and calculated to make all of good cheer; even those who had stored themselves away for the entire voyage, knowing their seasick tendencies, were encouraged in the hope that this would be the exceptional occasion, and that they, too, might look over the sea from the deck.

The passage, save for one long day and night was most calm and agreeable. During this time great alarm prevailed, the ladies in particular watched most anxiously, fearing the end near at hand. Indeed, prayers were said in the cabin, amidst the roaring tempest; surging winds, creaking of the vessel, which tossed wildly to and fro, with the sharpest lightning; loud commands of the captain, with the weird calls from the sailors, some of whom were lost in the tumult; water flooding the decks and pouring down the gangways, while the passengers were assembled in the main cabin. Meals were not thought of towards the end, and could not have been served in this affrighted condition, at any rate; though it must be admitted order did prevail.

The afternoon before landing, they sat on deck gazing out in silence as far as they could see. Unclouded sunlight enveloped the sea and shore as far as the eye could reach, in a bath of pure radiancy. The purple waters were covered with a rich white foam, and now and again sea gulls would flap their wings, almost with musical sound, as they flew by the vessel, carrying in their beaks, trophies gathered with great pride.

The reflections of both of them were tinged with

sorrow, which they strove to overcome, but time is the only healer of like pangs.

That night the moon shone forth in all her glory, and seated on deck he said to Dorothy, "We must try to think that life grows richer as it goes on, in no matter what way one has to live it, for it is not always mockery, nor is it forever filled with sadness. Your heart must not be a fountain of tender illusions; long as your dreams stay fine and fair, my dear, what need you care? Solidarity insures happiness, and this we must ever have. 'A gem is not polished without rubbing, nor is a man perfected without trials,' said some author."

The evening before they reached port, after dinner they went up on deck and seating themselves, were long silent, when he said, "When we look at the beautiful moon, we must believe that love is a flower of human nature, for beholding it fills us with such sweet sentiments that our hearts are gladdened."

Soon they descended to the beautifully illuminated cabin, where all were assembled and delightful music, both instrumental and vocal could be heard, in which all seemed to join with zest and great jolliness (even Dorothy and Bradley were of the party). The card players abandoned their usual haunts to join the joyous gathering, when a superb tenor voice rang forth and astonished them, as there had never been an intimation of his wonderful gift. It was ascertained he was an opera singer, but averse to disclosing his identity, so that he was enjoyed without being molested.

A bright pretty girl, not yet out of her teens, bent

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upon fun of some kind, gathered from a few of the passengers artificial flowers—for it must be admitted elaborate costumes are indulged in in these days on shipboard—and tying them together hastily, with ferns and palm leaves taken from the ship's decorations, and making quite a pretty nosegay, she presented it with a few amusing lines, fresh from a storehouse of her college-day larks, and calling forth peals of laughter from all.

The singer, who was most appreciative and charming of manner, selected from his repertoire a piece that was particularly suited to the fair lady, and sang it with all the emotion of his soul. It was late before they retired, after most of them with their particular little cliques had partaken of the usual Welsh rarebit, and a good night sent forth, some humming, others whistling gently, and with, for the most part, a divided feeling of joy and regret.

The day of landing was bright, though March's ugly wind was holding its own, and there was the usual flurry and flutter landing. They had not affiliated with the passengers, which was the keynote to their non-discovery as bride and groom, but the few whom they had met bade them a warm farewell, and when their feet were on terra firma in Rome, they were not sorry, as they had made great plans.

As all were assembled on deck the captain gave out that a chamois bag containing some diamonds of great value had been discovered missing, and the owner remembered having them with her when she went to the cabin in the storm, since which time she had been ill and her loss just discovered. It would be barely possible for anyone unconsciously to

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gather up such a thing with scattered articles of their own, and he begged if they had, to have it returned to his vessel in his care, for which a handsome reward would be paid, and his mind relieved of great regret over the circumstance.

When they reached Paris Bradley found posted at the American Exchange "Bag containing jewels lost on Teutonic recovered and restored to the owner of the property, with the reward cheerfully paid." The stateroom had been immediately adjoining theirs so that it was especially pleasing news to them, more so perhaps than thoughtless people might imagine.

They had a charming visit of three months, which they enjoyed most heartily, although for the most part the beaten track was gone over, and I shall not attempt a subject already so beautifully dilated upon, but say to you in all frankness that while they longed for home and its dear ones, they regretted to leave so much that was interesting and beautiful behind. Unexpectedly they drifted into old familiar haunts both sad and dear to them.

The conjectures of the passengers on all sides were, "How shall we fare at the custom house." Of course, all had been truly honest in the statement of their possessions, etc., but the feeling that they did not want their trunks roughly handled, beautiful gowns tossed, as they often are, caused disturbed feelings, and their faces were worthy of study.

Bradley and Dorothy were amongst the first to receive attention and Bradley's various trips had made his face a familiar one. Having no record of efforts to mislead by smuggling, they had no trouble

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with the few things declared, which were passed over without any delay; even the exquisite French toy, purchased for Bradley's boy, created no commotion, and there was no delay about their reaching home, where all was in readiness with the warmest of welcome.

They found Bradley a handsomer boy than ever, having passed some of the time with his grandparents in California, who found themselves each day more wrapped up in him. Elise, contrary to the usual French *bonne*, had been loyalty itself, and thought no child ever equalled *Mon Bijoux*, her pet name for him. The little fellow was bright and smart, and Daddy had not escaped his mind, with his various modes of amusing him; while Aunt (Dorothy) was as dearly beloved as ever, but now must be Mother, which in time he perverted into "Muddie."

I must not fail to say here that they had on the whole a very pleasant crossing for that season of the year, only two days when dishes, bottles and plates were tossed about on the tables, regardless of their braces, and not a few were confined to their staterooms, watching the angry waves dash up against the portholes, and sometimes hearing them wash across the deck, where but few were brave enough to venture; but at no time had there been cause for great anxiety, and when the seas calmed down, and the sunlight came forth in all its glory, then was a renewed feeling of good cheer and the longing for home, sweet home.

CHAPTER XV

DOROTHY naturally wished to go first to her old home, Bradley to the one which sheltered his boy, but the matter had been settled in their talks over their future plans, and their first stop was at Dorothy's, where an appreciation of what Bradley had been was shown him, beyond a doubt. And then they both went to see their son, with whom they remained long enough to learn that the grandparents were indulging in the hopes that their sunbeam would not be taken from them. They were old, and plead long and hard for his retention. Bradley said, "Mother, for the present he will be yours, but the future will tell its own tale;" and before they departed the beautiful rare toy was given their child, whose eyes sparkled with delight, while he danced with joy at Daddy's explanation of its mechanical charms, as well as to the intricacies explained to Elise—who had been handsomely remembered. The grandparents were brought appropriate and pleasing souvenirs, so that when the time for their withdrawal came all was serene.

Another new chapter in their lives had opened up and Bradley felt that while the iron was hot was the best time to launch forth. That night before departing, he told them he had seen a house which he felt would be suitable for their embarking in life, and greatly to their surprise and pleasure there was no demurring, and their plans were freely discussed and approved of.

The following day was devoted to business, first of all, but when those hours were over, they went together to the house which would most likely be their

home, for Bradley was a man of such taste and judgment that his wife had no reason to doubt his ability in this case, as well as all others. It was one of the conventional brown stones, but of less height than the majority of them, thereby suiting them better. After examining it thoroughly and determining what they should require done, they went home, and in the quiet of their own apartments the pros and cons of the case were discussed, and as peaceful slumbers closed in upon them a decision had been settled upon, and their minds relieved of suspense, at any rate.

Sunday was the next day, and she accompanied him to church without hesitancy, and their midday meal was one of great pleasure, relating their experiences abroad and since to her parents, who were alive with interest and promises about what they would do for them.

Daily visits were made to their darling, whom they told about the goat wagons on the Champs Elysee, the Hippodromes, the Polichinel, and all the sights calculated to please him. He would listen with his beautiful eyes wide open, and when they came to a pause, say, "More! more!" Finally, nestling away in his mother's arms, he would sometimes drop off to sleep to the sound of her sweet voice in some lullaby tune, and laying him down she would think of his own sweet mother, and the happiness denied her by cruel fate.

The requirements demanded of the landlord were not considered unreasonable, perhaps in view of the fact that the house had long been vacant, and while things were being put in order, they had great pleas-

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ure selecting many articles together. Others his wife and her mother chose, for whom this afforded a diversion of time spent otherwise monotonously. Bradley was a man of means, she a child of wealthy parents, and why should they not have their hearts' wishes, without its being "abundance de richesse," which good taste can always control.

When the time came for determining upon domestics, it was with difficulty that Dorothy prevented a disorganizing of her parents' home, for the butler, Zeno, a most capable servant of long standing, wished to go with them, but, of course, such an idea would not be entertained. Eliza, however, Dorothy's attendant from childhood up, was received with the affection Dorothy always bestowed upon her, and long as she had been in their employ, she had never divested herself of a most pronounced brogue, accompanied by a strong streak of Irish wit, which almost endeared her to people, and before long Bradley was as fond of the good old soul as Dorothy, whom she persisted in treating like a child.

When the subject was discussed of bringing little Bradley home, the thought arose that Ireland and France would not agree. "But," said Bradley, "let us not cross the bridge before reaching it," and they wished to spare the grandparents sorrow as long as possible.

The most satisfactory way to portray to your mind the pleasure these two devoted people derived from arranging their home, is to suggest your putting yourselves in their place under similar circumstances, and then you will have the story in a nutshell, while rejoicing over their happiness.

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Not so long after they were settled in their home, and had been entertaining elegantly, principally those of the Four Hundred Set, by whom they were often invited, but frequently declined invitations, the talk of summer plans began, but they determined to remain in the full enjoyment of their lovely home, until intense heat should call them from the city, when they would only depart for a few days at a time to reinforce their powers of endurance.

CHAPTER XVI

DOROTHY'S brother had sobered down with an intense disgust for the world, as he had really loved his wife, Hortense, and a dread overcame him that he should sometime chance to see her in her roll danceuse; and this is just what happened when he was on a business trip to Philadelphia, and sought diversion for the evening.

He was in one of the opera boxes with friends, recognized her and felt, too, that she had recognized him. Flight from the premises would have been his choice, but this he could not do under the circumstances without opening a vein of suspicion, and by remaining he became a victim of one of his saddest experiences, for she sent him a note full of repentance and assurances of her love for him. When it was handed him he put it in his pocket, with these words to the messenger: "Yes, just tell him that I will attend to it to-morrow," which had the desired effect of misleading them, and he remained until they were ready to leave, when he positively fled, saying he could not stand crowds.

The midnight train carried him back to New York in the most fevered state of excitement. He read over and over again her assurances of love and promises of fidelity, if only pardoned, and he feared to trust himself with his great weakness for her, and wanted to fly from danger; for he had no confidence in her, or inclination to receive her again as his wife. And still, he understood his own weakness. As she had once woven a network of entanglement about him, he feared she might do so again.

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His parents, when told of it, all facilitated his departure for Australia at once, by taking his two children into their home, and now was the opportunity for little Bradley to go to the home in which he should grow up, giving them the love they craved and were entitled to. The parting was hard on the old people, and so was the state of things causing their son great grief at the parting with his children; but he hoped through this step to teach himself that hatred for her which would serve as a protection in after life.

The vessel upon which he sailed was lost at sea, and the shock was so great to his mother, already a delicate woman, that it cost her life and plunged all into the deepest grief, aging the father by many years, and placing the cousin already in charge of the children at the head of his establishment.

No doubt, poor Dorothy said to herself, "All this misery caused by one man, who may darken the days of many more, and yet he lives!"

CHAPTER XVII

TIME sped along and Bradley and Dorothy were each day more and more to each other, though there was no expatiation upon the binding link. Their tastes were the same and their lives, so exemplary that they must in time be blessed with a realization of all their hearts' wishes.

Charles kept himself in the background and but for the fact that Louise appeared constantly upon the stage of life, memory of him would have faded away.

As luck would have it, a business friend of Bradley's, not of the type to be taken to his house, but to the club, appeared on the horizon and he was compelled to pay him some attention. After dining him they went to a much-talked-of vaudeville performance, and the leading character on the stage was Louise, in her radiant beauty, and with so divine a voice that all New York was going mad over her. Fortunately for Bradley, he could see and not be seen, so that the performance was enjoyed to the end, sending the stranger home an infatuated man, and Bradley one full of regret that he was made cognizant of the fact that she still lived and was known as Mademoiselle Camille. Now, especially in Dorothy's mourning period, she was not apt to become known to her, and Bradley would certainly guard her from all knowledge of who she was, if ever spoken of.

About this time Bradley's brother came to America and visited them, becoming able to write home the most pleasing things about their life and menage. As Virian, threw her enchantment over Merlin, so

did Dorothy over Bradley's brother. Being a man of greatest discretion, and seeing how engrossed they were by one another, he said to them one day, "I hope my coming has not deflected your course of action a hair's breadth. If I thought it had, I should hasten away." He became so fond of little Bradley that the parting cost him many a pang, and he gave them to understand he would be his sole heir, which it seemed would be the case.

The life led by them was, owing to the family's mourning, of the most quiet style, but just that to please one of his tastes, and as New York was well known to him when he cared for diversion, he knew how to procure it. Bradley sought no pleasure unaccompanied by his wife, unless for the advancement of his business, and that was gratifying to his brother.

The day his brother left they accompanied him to the vessel, upon which they found their old Captain, who welcomed them and extended many courtesies to the brother, thus adding to the pleasure of the trip; but there was a vein of mischief in the Captain, who soon spied a flourishing old maid amongst his passengers and arranged that it should reach her ears that Mr. McLaud was a wealthy Scotchman, of finest social standing, and the passengers were amused by the ruses she resorted to in the hopes of commanding his attention.

At first her advances were not noticed, but soon they became annoying and perceiving that she was making a laughingstock of herself and him, he determined to enter into the spirit of it and see how far she would go. Youth had long since left her,

leaving decided marks of disguised age, with all the frills of jeunesse, and when he paid court to her all eyes were upon him, greatly to the passengers' amusement. This he permitted to continue for some days, acting the part of lover to the queen's taste, when he brought the affair to a climax by enlisting her sympathies for him in his recent bad failure, and return to Scotland indefinitely. The following day illness confined her to her cabin, and all were deprived of enjoying her elaborate costumes, musically affected voice, and attempted attractive manners.

He enjoyed the whole affair immensely, as well as those of his card friends who had put him on his guard, only to find that beneath his sober exterior there was a vein of hilarity, ever controlled by dignity. They met the day the vessel landed in Liverpool, when his sympathies were expressed but received with marked coolness, and thus farewells were exchanged with a twinkle in many an eye.

When Bradley and Dorothy were on their way home, their machine was run into by an affrighted horse, and the chauffeur was hurt sufficiently not to be able to continue at his post; but the car once put in the management of another chauffeur they went speedily to the hospital to have him tended to.

A broken finger and some severe scratches proved to be all the damage done, but this calls to mind the story they tell on Horace Greeley, when driving over the mountains in Colorado: He wanted to reach a certain destination speedily and noticing that the stage driver was letting his horses go very slowly, he remonstrated, saying, "Driver, can't you go a little faster? I must be at my post by such a

time to make a speech." Not much heed was paid to his remark, in fact he began to wonder if the man was not deaf, when all of a sudden he cracked his whip and started up at such a mad speed that Greeley thought he would be dashed over the mountain side, and again called out, "Not quite so fast, driver." The reply was, "Keep your seat, Mr. Greeley, I'll get you there in time, or break your d—— neck."

Home again and restored to their own heart to heart life, they were happy and began to question if they were not growing selfish, but it was a most peaceful trio, with their darling little son, who often reminded them so forcibly of his mother that it caused a sharp pang, and yet they would not have him other than as he was; and his amusing little stories always met with a response from them showing that pride in him was not lacking. One day when his remarks caused them to wonder about the workings of his little fancies, Bradley looked up and said, "Is it not true that imagination is a great, wild, seething, insatiate tongue of fire, that thwarts the original desire to gorge itself with realities, and turns into wild fancies which sear common sense?"

He called the child, and taking him upon his knee talked quietly with him, wishing to see how his little mind was working, and marveled at the rapid changes from one subject to the other, with distinct ideas about everything; and such tender affection that soon he was embracing him and wanting to be hugged in return.

It was a beautiful clear evening and he suggested a walk, so they went to the park, through which ele-

gant equipages were passing, and as they walked further on, Bradley saw two figures seated on a sofa, the one, a woman, pleading with the other, a man, whom he quickly recognized as Charles, and he fancied intoxicated. Without a word, a cross-road was taken and a stillness of death followed until they reached home, when Dorothy's pallor showed him she had seen what he hoped would escape her, and he called to the butler for a brandy and soda, which he gave her, without speaking, indeed never alluding to the occurrence in after days.

The solidarity existing between them insured perfect happiness, and what more could be asked for? History tells us that Diogenes found children in Sparta, women in Athens, but nowhere had he seen men. The present case, for one, proved that to be false; nor can Plato's definition be implied. Bradley feared the reaction after this spell, but Dorothy showed herself the woman of self-control and strength that inspired him with increased pride and admiration for her, the following day only indicating that her suffering had told its tale by leaving traces of pallor upon her resigned face. An effort was made to take her out of herself entirely by visiting Baltimore for a few days where she had friends—indeed relatives. They put up at the Baltimore Hotel; there, things were enjoyed in a quiet way, everyone striving to do their part toward making it agreeable.

During their absence the boy had been with his grandparents, which was delightful for them, as well as beneficial for him.

Drives in Baltimore's beautiful parks brought

back recollections of the Champs Elysee, the Bois de Boulogne, the Pincheon Hills, the Boboli Garden, the Crystal Palace grounds, etc., and they enjoyed every moment of their stay.

Some philosopher said, "Time was an estate which produced nothing of value without cultivation," so it would seem that the better these two knew each other, the more nearly they were brought in touch, which is not always the case with man and wife at the present day.

Upon their return they found that old Eliza had been asserting herself with the other domestics and rather lording it over them, almost causing a stampede, which had many most amusing phases to it; but this was the first unpleasant occurrence since their establishment in their home, and painful as it was, must be dealt with then and there, bringing to light that matrimony on the part of her young mistress had engendered in Eliza ideas of the same nature—no fool like an old one—and that she was actually trying to captivate the butler, who was a beau to the housemaid. When called to Dorothy's room for an explanation, the efforts made by Eliza towards rejuvenation, almost caused Dorothy to lose her dignity and self-composure, for there was even a slight dash of rouge on her cheek, etc. Dorothy soon made her understand that each one held their own position in the house, and that she and her husband were the only dictators; that she was old enough to be mother to most of them, and should rather edify than shock them, and she trusted there would be no continuance of folly that would only lay her open to ridicule, and estrange them all from her.

It took time to quiet the stormy waves upon the sea, so to speak, but it was effected in time and Eliza took her old stand, never to be swayed from it again.

Winter's stormy weather was beginning to gather about them and the sharp, cold winds, the biting snowstorms, the dark overclouded days, etc., caused Dorothy to have repeated colds, which reminded her husband of all he had passed through, and made him fearful of what might take place, causing him to wish her to leave home for a more desirable climate.

But he could not go, his partner being away, and to avoid complying with this wish of his, she took great care of herself, which enabled them to forego the pain of separation, accompanied by anxiety, and spring opened up without her being more affected, than was to be anticipated under the circumstances, for before many a long day she was to become a mother, and the wish was for a daughter.

In these anxious times for Bradley, all the tenderest impulses of his nature were tuned up to the highest keynote, and the gentleness of his disposition endeared him more than ever to his wife, so calm and placid as to increase dreaded forebodings, which time proved were ungrounded, as all went well, and their hopes were gratified before many a day, adding to the trio a violet-eyed daughter, possessed of the sweetness which heaven alone can bestow, and adding another link to the chain of happiness.

The mother was indeed beautiful as she lay upon her bed covered with the costliest linens, laces and eiderdown plumeau. Her golden hair was tossed

in wavy profusion about her angelically smiling face, and the atmosphere, laden with the perfume of violets, was so peacefully serene as to tempt bells of joy to resound throughout the air, proclaiming what their hearts would gladly have the world know.

It was not a joy that flitted before them like Macbeth's witches around their caldron—no, no, it had come to stay, and when Bradley left the house to enjoy fresh air, after spending anxious hours within, the blue dome of the cloudless sky seemed never so attractive before, and as night came on, the moonlit waves sent forth such brilliancy as man could scarcely conceive, and his heart was resplendent with glory and happiness.

We are told that youth is often aglow with generosity and affection; but it is not comparable to the feelings of a man in his position, and when he reached his wife's room again, where the shadows of a soft light were flickering, God's gift lying tucked away in her exquisitely bedecked basonet, he sat by the side of the sweet wife, and they both forgot that they had ever been smitten with grief.

Balzac says, "Love passes through endless transformations before it passes forever into our existence, and makes it glow with its own color and flame."

The next day was one of sunshine and happiness for little Bradley, whose delight was great over the possession of a little sister, into whose eyes he would have loved to punch his fingers, as well as pinch the tiny nose, and then he wanted mother to arise and go to the basonet and see her. "So pretty, Muddie, Oh! Oh!" Well, he was too full for utterance and must kiss her little hands and laugh at her squirm-

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ing feet, altogether it was no small task to get him out of the room, and his talk was of naught else for many a long day.

In the gloaming that evening, when the subject of a name was broached, Dorothy drew tears to his eyes by saying she must be called Annita, and when they parted that night he told her never before had she been so dear to him as in this moment, when the grandeur of her nature shone forth so brilliantly.

Her wish met with approval from all. Her recovery was speedy and ere long she was gladdening all hearts by the reflection of her own, and receiving gifts and congratulations from friends in this country, as well as abroad.

Eliza would have been proud to have been its nurse, but in these advanced days, a nurse must know far more than how to rock a cradle or spoil a child by rocking it to sleep. She was promised that when the child grew older, she would have the care of her, which was some consolation, at least.

Many a little surprise had been arranged for his wife, one of them the filling of the palm room with rare plants; singing birds scattered about in pretty gilt hanging cages; an aquarium with specimens of gold and silver fish, hiding themselves in the pebbles, stones and mosses imbedded in it. The music of the birds was sweet, and her delight was great when she saw the work prompted by love for her, and folded in the napkin at her place at the table was a blue velvet box containing an exquisite solitaire diamond of rare value, hanging from a delicate chain destined to dangle from her neck, with high collar; for she was the sort of woman who kept certain

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charms from the vulgar gaze—they were for her husband alone.

All through her illness violets, her favorite flower, adorned her room, and that sweet offering she felt was evidence enough of his appreciation of her, but it would seem too much could not be done for her.

At the christening of the little one, all commented upon her lovely deep violet eyes, which many thought like her mother's, but they were more deeply sunken in her head, giving a shadow about them that almost gave the effect of black lace, and made you recall what Quida said upon the subject.

Her parents had not enjoyed the arrival of her brother's children, so far off and, as it were, forgotten, so that this one was seemingly the first grandchild, enjoyed by the grandfather, who was none the less devoted to the children of his lost son Arthur. A check of no small amount was his offering, and Annita's parents, who were really touched, sent Baby a check to compound itself until she was of age; while to Dorothy they sent a miniature of Baby Bradley's mother, surrounded by diamonds, as they could not doubt her love for her, and the little ones were not to know that they were not full brother and sister. Is this not all another evidence of God's love for the righteous?

CHAPTER XVIII

BEFORE Dorothy was able to go about very much, they learned that Charles had left the country, accompanied by Louise, really his *bonne amie*, but sometimes figuring as his wife, though she continued her life as *prima donna* under the name of *Mademoiselle Camille*, and virtually supported Charles. Like all fascinating women she had many admirers, which aroused Charles' jealousy and drove him to drink.

Hearing of their departure was a great relief to Bradley, but the report was not yet confirmed, and his effort was to ascertain the truth, whether or not they had departed. It would seem that before he left he was bent upon seeing Dorothy's child; with this end in view he watched the house, and one of the first times the nurse had the child out, and approached the carriage and scrutinizing its occupant, departed.

Fortunately, Bradley was the first to hear of this from the nurse upon returning home, and forbade her speaking of it. This exasperated Bradley and he put detectives on his track, who soon after reported he was no longer in the country, and quiet was again restored to Bradley's heart, while the hope that he would remain on the other side infused his breast.

The two young people brought much sunshine into the life of the old grandfather, who was kindness itself to the orphaned children of poor Arthur.

When I say Bradley and Dorothy were supremely happy, I am scarcely portraying a fair picture, but even great felicity falls upon one sometimes, and it began to do so with them, inspiring them with a long-

ing for diversion, so they frequented the best theaters and were greatly refreshed by a breath of new light brought into their lives.

Lectures of all kinds interested them, not the least of them, one by Josephine Casey, organizer for the National Garment Workers' Union. Bradley was trying to determine whether or not he was in favor of equal suffrage, and both he and his wife attended many lectures by noted speakers.

Professor Lucy Salmon said, "College women are beginning to realize that it is not the women of society in Colorado who opposed the vote, but the bridge players of New York. Not the woman who takes an intelligent interest in life, but the one who watches the callers of her neighbors, etc."

Bradley was so broadminded that he wanted to judge fairly upon the subject, and was putting himself in a position to gain intelligent information. One thing struck him forcibly which was the fact that more than one priest was in favor of suffrage; openly avowed that women exercised a most beneficial effect in society, as supporters of suffrage. This has caused more than one deep thinker to readjust his thinking cap, and be slow in determining the real sentiments upon the subject.

One evening after they had been in quest of diversion, and returned home, Bradley observed more than the usual quiet in his wife, and drawing her to a seat on the sofa, found that she was harboring the thought that perchance she did not equal him mentally, and that he might weary of her; for to be frank she had rushed from the schoolroom, one might say, into the vortex of society, giving para-

mount attention to instrumental and vocal music, with the usual smattering of reading bestowed by society girls, just to keep up with the talk of the day, and had not cultivated solidity. All this she acknowledged to him and was willing to adopt a plan of life mapped out by him which would make her not only more companionable to him, but far less wearying to herself. "But," said he, "do you think my love for the mother of my children could ever be on the wane? Never! You are all in all to me, but I want you to shine forth before your fellow-men as a rare and not prosaic woman, thereby keeping my pride in you constantly stimulated."

The following day was Sunday and both the little ones came to breakfast with them; little Bradley to amuse them with his endless and often to be wondered at questions, while Annita charmed them with her loveliness, and her brother's tenderness received so sweetly, was a source of joy forever to their parents. Sunday breakfast was their only full meal with them; sometimes they were brought in for dessert, and always spoken of by the butler as Master Bradley and Mistress Annita, the true English style.

Before departing for church a message came from Dorothy's father, with the wish that they dine with him. The weather was so fine that they walked, and their machine met them after church at the door, taking them to the rather distant home of her parent. Her father was ailing, and a plan for going to his home at Lakewood, Edelweiss, for a long stay was discussed and determined upon, greatly to Dorothy's regret, for it meant she would see less than

she wished to of him, and he but little of Baby Annita.

Arthur's elder son (named for his father) was preparing for school, where he would go shortly. James, the younger (after his grandfather), would continue his studies under a governess for still a while, and, of course, would be with him, thus keeping life in the house.

As age and ill health came into the Rosch family, Bradley found his father-in-law was appealing more and more to him, abiding by his judgment in almost everything.

Soon the city house was closed and all had repaired to Edelweiss, where the daughter's suite was ever in readiness for her; but annoyance awaited him in the person of the caretaker, whose quarters were in the lodge gate, a lovely rustic house, which in summer was covered with honeysuckle and wistaria vines, which had to be kept trimmed around the windows and doors, not to exclude light from them, but it presented the prettiest of pictures and was most inviting.

He was a Swiss man by the name of Andre, with a wife and child, towards whom he became so brutal that for a while he was banished from his position, and when he returned it was to find that his wife and child had fled from the country, to join those of their own blood on the other side. He was wonderfully clever, and when taken away was in the midst of arranging the unusual adornments of the grounds, such as rustic bridges, small streams, fountains, grottoes, etc., and if his eccentricities could have been kept under control, he would have made a veritable

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Garden of Eden of the place. As it was an effort to trace his lost ones, it made him abandon his position and his successor fell short of their expectations, though he did improve the grounds, as must be admitted.

Her father soon felt improved in the balmy climate of Lakewood, and hoped to have them with him in the summer; but a trip abroad for all four of them was being planned, even at this early date. Bradley, however, who was very fond of his first wife's father as well, conceived the wish to see them return to their magnificent place on the Hudson, Benvenuta; where at their time of life far more comfort was procurable.

Time heals the deepest wounds, and although when he bade adieu to the spot, where the most harrowing events of his life had taken place he never expected to return to it, as time wore on he had a desire to have his son know something of the place so beloved by his mother, and he surprised the boy's grandparents by expressing a willingness to accompany them there and remain a few days. This he did, taking Elise, the nurse, and Bradley, the baby.

At first his sufferings well nigh killed him, but were mellowed into beautiful Christian resignation, and hand in hand with his boy he went over many hallowed spots, telling him whatever was suitable, and reserving for himself her room, in which everything was sacred to him, and was used with the feeling that it would make him a better man, for what love equals the first, when the wellsprings of the heart are newly opened?

The first two days he kept for his own and was

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much in solitude; then coming forth with manly courage, he made himself useful to the grandparents, with whom he left Bradley for a few days. When he departed he had endeared himself more than ever to the in-laws, who saw him leave reluctantly.

Arriving home, Dorothy greeted him in the sweetest of ways, and with little Annita in her arms made so sweet a picture that his embraces were the fondest and his heart soon opened unto her, and everything was told, kindling anew the love for the one who had helped secure her their present happiness.

“In time, my dear, we must both return to Benvenuta and bring her back into our lives, shall we not?” “Gladly,” she replied, “for she will ever be dear to me, nor cause a feeling of jealousy.”

It is the center of warmth and light created by love, friendship and devotion that brings about that union of hearts and mind. The English call the dearest spot on earth home. The French have no better name than “foyer.” Theirs were peaceful slumbers that night for unto the righteous quiet of soul is ever given, and love was fortified by their recent experiences, and wish to be true to the dead as well as the living.

CHAPTER XIX

THE death of Annita was such a heartrending blow to her mother, not to speak of the undermining of her health, caused by her constant vigilance, that she soon followed her to her last resting place, leaving a most wretched, desolate husband, alone, one might say, to realize each day more forcibly what his losses had been, and but for the preponderant Christian feelings of his nature, he would have questioned the justice of an allwise Maker. Often he would be heard saying, "And yet such are the ways of Divine Providence." In his sorrow he learned to express himself aloud, which was most pathetic, and yet seemed to be a great relief to him.

Bradley filled to the best of his ability the position of his lost ones, and strove to sweeten the bitter sting of his declining years by bringing about him those who loved him, having his reconciliation to the great bereavement paramount to all else in mind. The effort was not crowned by success, as they were forced to realize he was longing for death rather than cultivating life, and not long after he returned to Benvenuta the last time he passed away in the manner that future accounts will lay before us.

Hortense (Florice) continued her mad career and, strange to say, attracted great admiration still, collecting about her men who blighted their own domestic happiness by seeking her society; and finally one evening her fluffy skirts caught on fire, causing great consternation among the audience, who were calmed with great difficulty after the asbestos curtain was lowered, and the manager coming to the

front assured them there was no damage done, and Mademoiselle Florice only slightly injured. Then the curtain rose again, and the performance was continued, all thinking but lightly of the occurrence.

Mademoiselle was taken to the hospital, where no pains and money were spared to restore her; but when she appreciated her condition, and realized that her looks were greatly marred, and that her limbs would never be the same, she lost hope, became disconsolate, and partook of some quieting drug, which it was impossible to trace as having been brought to her, and passed away, greatly to the surprise of her physician. She had been a great favorite with the ballet set, much courted by the roue set, and was followed to her last resting place by some pitying friends, who little knew the veil of sorrow that her demise would raise from many a life; not the least of them her two innocent sons, who it was to be hoped would never be told the sad tale, and the world would soon wipe from its memory all thoughts of the famous danceuse.

Kind Providence spared the family all allusions to whom she had been, and humiliation did not have to be endured by them, as upon many previous occasions. Now, it was hoped that Charles would remain abroad, as the eclat caused by Louise's superb voice was no less far-reaching on that side of the water than it had been on this, and it would seem the life in that atmosphere was more in conformity with his tastes.

But Bradley asked himself what did that step concerning his curiosity to see Dorothy's child mean? Could it be that degradation of nature, jealousy and

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spite had been stimulated, and that he contemplated harm of some kind? Fortunately, Dorothy was ignorant of it and in this instance sorrow was spared her.

CHAPTER XX

IT MUST not be conjectured that Dorothy had forgotten little Albert, or the promises made to take him in the machine through the park—not for a moment—but circumstances prevented their word being lived up to. However, the name of Albert was a familiar one in their family. When little Bradley was naughty and wilful, his mother would often say, “Albert would not do that,” and it generally had a quieting effect, while he, on the other side, when particularly good, would ask, “Is Albert as good a boy as I am?” His name was always most soothing.

One evening his mother said, “If you are a good boy I will take you with me some time to get Albert for a spin,” which delighted him. Strange to say, not long after this when Bradley and his wife were walking in the park, they were startled by a child’s rushing to Dorothy and saying something sweet, as it were, under breath, for the child had been taught she was “Pretty Lady’s” friend, and his recollections of “Pretty Lady” were very vivid, as well as loving. Annita had told her experiences then to her husband and Dorothy, and as all these recollections pressed upon them they were glad to talk to the boy, now quite well grown, and asking him to walk with them, they learned much of his father, amongst other things that he was in poor health.

Bradley took it all in and promised himself to call soon and see him, which he did; while Dorothy took Albert for the promised spin, and the child was clever enough to love little Bradley especially, because he was “Pretty Lady’s” child, and was so ten-

der with him that Bradley never forgot him, and his parent. He had ever the deepest interest in Albert, and without making his delicate father any promises, they were sure they would never lose track of the child or let him suffer, because of the part he had acted in Annita's life.

Little Annita had grown to be a lovable child, under old Eliza's care for the most part, though she was getting old and had an assistant nurse; but as said before the rearing of these children was largely English, and while they were not brought much to the front, they were enjoyed and beloved by their parents, each one having one to coddle in their real home domestic hours.

During the sharp, bleak, winter months, not long after Christmas, when a change of climate was being discussed by Bradley and his wife, who should come down upon them most unexpectedly, but Bradley's brother, Reinhart McLaud, a most original character, destined to figure amusingly in their lives. Be it remembered he was the one of vessel renown with the queer old maid, who dropped him when no money was in sight.

He had been a sort of wanderer over the face of the globe, an honorable, upright man, totally different from his brother, seeing and enjoying life in the most original ways. Now, after some years of absence from New York, he was anxious to see how the world had been treating his brother; therefore, he had given them a veritable surprise, and the first evening of his arrival, as they were seated around the dinner table, he said, "I say, one of your celebrated opera singers is creating an immense furore

in London; everyone is flocking to see her—Mademoiselle Camille. By jove! but she's a corker, with such a voice as can scarcely be dreamed of. I heard her every night while there, and amongst her entourage was a man I seem to have seen before, but could not place."

Bradley had been striving to change the subject without effect, and glancing at his wife saw intense pallor overspread her face, whereupon he said, "Are you ill, my dear?" and was surprised to have her reply, "Indeed, no," and then proceed to ask questions in the calmest and most indifferent way, which rather comforted him with the thought that she had become perfectly indifferent.

Reinhart described the woman, her grand costumes and wonderful jewels; her train of followers, many of them from amongst the nobility, "and you know they are often a reckless, drinking, gambling set, and I suppose shower her with costly gifts. No wonder, for she is startlingly beautiful, as well as being a wonderful singer."

Bradley said, "Why, Reinhart, I think it was time for you to come over here and let us look after you. But, my man! what do mother and sister think of this rather sudden change in you?"

"Why, nothing, but that I am cutting my eye-teeth, so long coming through; and they know that after all, I am a harmless fellow and will do nothing to smirch the family name. When a fellow has reached my time of life, some indulgence should be accorded him."

Before he departed they were in roars of laughter over his experiences, not the least a detailed account

of his fun with the ship's old maid; and his brother was rather startled at the change effected in him during the past two years, and talked long about it. When he left Bradley entered into a thoughtful mood, and even after sleep had striven to quiet him, he was revolving in his mind the pros and cons of the case and asking himself why Reinhart had declined their wish to have him remain with them. Perchance, a love of entire freedom, unaffected by the least restraint, was accountable for it.

Time rolled on and nothing of marked note transpired, but Bradley feared the growth of idiosyncrasies in his brother might get him into trouble. Be it remembered, he was his senior by many years, and, of course, a certain respect restrained him. Before long this greatly esteemed man was startling them by rather rash procedures, which were at first called eccentricities, but finally watched with amazement, admitting of no comprehension.

He once spoke of a woman whom he admired and had seen on the street, as being possessed of "burning eyes that blazed through her lace veil," and then he said he agreed with Balzac that "a woman in squalid poverty would exercise no fascination over him, were she as attractive as the Helen."

This remark was suggested by Bradley's inquiring after an old friend in Scotland, who at one time was thought to be a sweetheart of his. "No," said he, "Hester and I understand each other perfectly; sentiment is out of the question, for the older I grow, the more necessary I deem it for happiness that the wolf should be kept from the door. I have sufficient

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for myself, but not for a family, and matrimony without children is incomplete.”

He was an unusually handsome man, with auburn hair streaked with grey and white; of erect carriage, tall and active. Nothing that he did would surprise me, even to enlisting the deep fascinations of one of the “Four Hundred;” therefore, let us bide our time and observe everything that comes our way.

Although there had been talk of going abroad, with that disturbing element on the other side the idea was abandoned for the time being, and Benvenuta thought most favorably of. The house was constructed in a style which might convey the idea of having been built at separate times; but not so; indeed, the thought was that the entire house might be deemed at some time overlarge, and a portion closed off. Now it was just the most pleasing idea with them when they thought of going out. The more they dwelt upon it the more pleased they became, and ere long, in response to repeated invitations from Mr. Treville, and urgent pressing ones from the aunt, who found him failing, they betook themselves from New York, arriving in time to pass the last few weeks of his life with him, adding in every way to his comfort and peace of mind.

It was the old gentleman’s wish to talk business with Bradley, who felt it would be wiser for him to know nothing, but observing his distress, he yielded, resolved to make no suggestions whatsoever; and it so happened that there was not the slightest ground upon which to offer ideas of his own; and Bradley was flattered by his father-in-law having left him the absolute use of Benvenuta until

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his grandchild should be of age, provided he kept it in order; and then the spot upon which the outhouse stood, with the mansion, should become the property of the idolized son of his daughter, to whom the place had been hallowed by so many associations.

With his son-in-law and wife, as well as the grandchild, the aunt, and the two grandsons about his bedside, he drew one sweet, quiet long breath and passed away, just as day was dawning, and the lark's soft notes were filling the air. The doctor had felt that the end was still far off and had withdrawn, knowing that if needed, his son-in-law and wife could do all that would be required, and when the bell from the village church rang forth in sorrowful tidings, many an eye was filled with tears and hearts rent with sorrow; for he had always been a kind and sympathizing friend, gladdening many hearts as had his wife and daughter, by deeds of generosity in hours of adversity.

The old gentleman was laid to rest alongside of his daughter and next to his wife, and when Bradley left the spot, after everyone had departed, he felt that his manly feelings had again been tried as by fire, and instead of wearing a crown of glory, his might be almost considered as one of thorns. It was their dear aunt who assumed all the painful task of removing sorrowful phases before the family returned to Benvenuta, and when the will was read, all possibility of want or lack of comfort was barred from her during the remainder of her lifetime. From the fullness of heart she said, "May I never be parted from my parentless boys."

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In a few days, Bradley, his family and his servants went to Benvenuta to remain as long as possible, for life there seemed to be more natural than in the city, especially now during the time of mourning.

CHAPTER XXI

REINHART was clever, but not practical, and on the order of Captain Sellers, wanting to embark in all sorts of new schemes, which gave Bradley additional anxiety. One of his wildcat ventures was designed to open a new chapter in his life, which all hoped would tone him down and make him more like himself of old. His deep interest in all aeroplane matters caused him to spend much of his time on the aviation field, and no doubt he would be induced to invest money in one way or another, and most likely lose it. Indeed, if he did not make some madcap ascent they would be more than pleased.

Time went on, they seeing but little of him, when one day he was quite seriously hurt by a fall in an ascent, and his family being notified, almost rejoiced, when his injuries were not pronounced of a serious nature, requiring time for an ample rest when his idiosyncrasies might be brought under control, by serious reflection.

Henry IV said, "Men have much and various knowledge, but no one is thoroughly acquainted with himself," and it would seem that this is true, in many instances.

Reinhart's stay in the hospital brought him in contact with one destined to figure amusingly in his life at a later day. When it was deemed prudent he went to Benvenuta to recuperate, and while there letters came to him of a most seductive nature. They fired the chord of mischief within him, and while he was gaining strength he resolved to see what the outcome would be to a strange procedure—one where love's wild fancies had been led astray.

One evening as he sat alone, rather planning to have some fun out of letters just received, he said to himself, "I wonder if I can distinguish facts plainly in the twilight of danger, and if it would not be wiser for me to shun the fire? After all, it is the will which gives man the power to accomplish what he wishes, and his judgment should steer him against danger?" Therefore, his venturesome propensities gained ascendancy over him.

For the present he enjoyed Dorothy's tender care; rather appreciated the wisdom of Bradley's suggestion; was moved by the affection of the children, and more than once caught himself wishing that he had been more farseeing in his earlier life, which would have made him less heedless, and now at the head of such a home as his brother's.

But, like the little boy, he said, "Why cry over spilled milk?" and then contemplated how to go about the risky fun he was promising himself, and a reply to the last gushing note, and as address given for himself, was his first leap in the dark. Now a regular correspondence began, with such effusions of love poured forth as almost to stagger him. There are situations where one cheapens things by the wish to put them into words, besides which Reinhardt was of too prosaic a nature to be capable of writing strong love sentiments; but what could one do after the receipt of such an overflow of tenderness as the following:

"You, the dearest of men; was ever the like of you created before? And why is it that I have not been able to touch the well-springs of your heart?

"With such tender, far-reaching eyes as yours, a voice so soft and musical, that in my dreams angels flit about me; and your

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dear face is seen through an aureole resplendent with beauty, and I cannot think through what means I am to win the only star, that will prove the guiding one of my life.

"I feel convinced you never have realized how fully you are all in all to me, or you would have quenched the thirsting of my soul ere this; and now I shall await impatiently your reply, while assuring you of my undying fidelity.

"AURELIA."

Reinhart received this a few days after his return to the hotel. The weather was dark and lugubrious, the dampness suggesting that home was the best place for him until the clouds dispersed and the sun shone forth in full glory again. Seated before a cheerful fire he read and re-read the letter, saying first, "What nonsense," and then "She's got it bad," but all the same being flattered, as the advancing years of one are prone to make them. He held onto it and smiled as though somewhat pleased, but pride lest he be laughed at forbade his showing it to even his best friends, and long contemplation brought forth the driest possible response, destined to be as much enjoyed by her as hers was by him. There was a cessation in her writing most regularly and finally he asked if he might not call upon her, but the reply was "Not yet, mother frowns upon anything that looks at all matrimonial."

Reinhart's vanity was fanned by the breezes of love; he became more painstaking than ever in his attire, and was expecting to meet the woman sometime whose brilliancy shone forth more forcibly each day; but as only poets' love letters are worthy of appearing before the eyes of the public we permit him to enjoy them alone.

While this lasted Reinhart's best friend, the perpetrator of the joke, watched the increase of his

vanity and entire self-satisfaction with great amusement, often striving to ascertain the cause of the change, as well as the lack of inclination to be out amongst men, as in days of old. But his only reply was, "I believe I have learned wisdom at last, and have sufficient diversion of a more rational nature."

When the curtain was down his friends enjoyed the joke hugely, but realized it must end sometimes, and what would be the consequence with this man of genuine nature,—though when once aroused fury of a demon? How should he be able to appease his wrath? Might it not be well to take his brother into his confidence? But no, for then it would be a case of encountering two Samsons instead of one. They drifted along with a continuation of soft missives being sent, as well as the hope that his best friend would be taken into his confidence, and thereby a loophole for escape offered.

What would life be without hope, so it was that one evening, the feeling of wishing to share his singular happiness with his friend caused him to invite him to his room and after a quiet chat ask him what he would do with a woman so infatuated as the accompanying letter proved her to be. Whereupon, he produced first one and then the other, with suitable comments, and placed them in the hands of the originator, who being convulsed with laughter was glad to be able to find some excuse when saying, "My dear Reinhart, I think she's cracked, and if I were you I should wash my hands of her and call the whole thing to a halt."

This he would not do without first seeing her, and the matter terminated in his friends making a clean

breast of it and causing such veritable stupefaction that for a while he was non-plussed and did not know whether to be indignant or amused. His silence gave the friend time to explain that it was only a joke and no offense intended. At this the Scotchman said, "It is but true that you Americans are queer fellows. In my country I should kick the perpetrator of such a one-sided joke down the stairs, and I believe after all the customs of one's native land are by far the best. To be honest with you had I not been called home and on the eve of departure, I do not think I should be so indulgent, but my heart is full of anxiety over the possibility of the occurrences since my departure, and the forgiving side of my nature presents itself. However, he laughs best who laughs last. Perchance you will visit my country sometime, old fellow, and then beware; take care."

Bradley had learned of the death of his mother, but with so long a trip before him and his not being entirely well, he abstained from telling his brother, only instructed the Captain to do so before they landed. His friend saw him off on the vessel and concluded he was a jolly, good fellow, as well as a most forgiving one.

When the ship sailed away Bradley told him of the sad news awaiting him on landing, and he, in return, said when he felt he could enjoy a joke to call upon him and he would give it to him. Thus he left him with the heaviest hearts to go where he always got solace, namely, to the dearest of wives, who met him with their lovely children, whose caresses ef-

faced much of the sting of true dejection. What is so soothing as the merry laughter of children?

When all was quiet, for English children retire early, and the sweet stillness of twilight yet hovered over them, they sat holding each other's hands talking of the faraway home of his childhood, as well as manhood, with the dear ones connected with it, and recalling to mind what home had meant to him. Dorothy saw tears in his eyes, nor was he ashamed to let them course down his cheeks, and be kissed away by a woman whose noble soul would ever prompt her to be his guiding star.

Absence from home was prohibited him by business as well as domestic demands, so that letters alone must serve as messengers of love and sympathy.

As they bade each other good night, and sought resignation by gazing upon the stars, heaven's beautiful illuminators, he said, "Dear, the angel of Death has not spared me, but God Grant I may never have to relinquish you to it."

It was many a long day before Reinhart's friend related the amusing occurrences of those exalted days of his happiness, and when he did Bradley said, the one blessing in the whole affair was that it prevented another rash step, and diverted his mind as, perchance, nothing else would have done, and that he was grateful as he knew his brother would be, when the stage of sound judgment dawned upon him.

CHAPTER XXII

THEY all returned to Benvenuta through the first beautiful snowstorms, enjoying lovely scenery, the warm crackling hickory logs that two men had trouble in carrying to the andirons in their living room, and when the chimney was well filled with blazing logs, the family would sit about it with only the firelight, and Mama and Auntie would tell them Kris Kringle tales until their little eyes would sparkle with delight, and when they had spent a few moments bidding Daddy good night, they would slip off to bed, delighted with the thought that the angels were still making their feather beds (for snow was still falling); to dream of what Christmas would be and to regret that they must go back to New York.

It was deemed wiser not to attempt to remain in such intense cold, so that before long the peace and quiet of the country was abandoned for the noise and clatter of the city, for Bradley's homecomings had been fraught with pure hardships, as sometimes he would return well sprinkled with snow, scattered over his garments, and fragments of ice hanging from his clothes. His life was one of confinement and often he would send the machine home that he might have a long bracing walk, which he realized was beneficial to him.

Once domiciled in New York, the delight of the little ones was to make their Cousin James, when he returned from school, tell them all about what was going on in Benvenuta and count the days until they should return there.

Arthur, the older cousin, was at a far-away

school, coming home only at certain holidays, but Auntie never forgot to send sunshine into his life when she could, for he was one of her parentless boys.

Bradley's boy grew more and more like his beautiful mother, and little Annita like hers, with that sweet gentle look of resignation which made her beloved by all, and caused her father to wish as she grew older there might be more joy beaming from her sweet violet eyes, and less evidence of the sad past life of her poor mother. Life is really a lake for memories, a mirror in which everything is reflected, and yet for the sake of the living we must seek to be cheerful and happy; not wearing our sorrows where claws can peck at them. The heart does not exist that has not its own sorrows, but fortitude often teaches one to smile through their tears, and to bring to the front the comforts of religion, with its edifying effects.

CHAPTER XXIII

BRADLEY'S mother's death had been wholly unexpected (although she had never been the same from the hour of her husband's demise), and the stroke of paralysis which took her off had been a great shock to her daughter and friends, the former taking long to rally from it. Mrs. McLaud was a very handsome, distinguished looking lady, with the sweetest and most refined nature, as well as possessed of her own share of fortitude and strength of character. Her remains were put away in the family vault awaiting the arrival of her son, whose homecoming was so sad that it revolutionized his entire nature, bringing out the most desirable features, and bidding fair to make him fully equal to the responsibilities imposed upon him, in the care of an estate surpassing in wealth their highest expectations.

After his arrival solemn services were performed at their family vault, in the most touching style. As all stood about the door of this beautiful structure built upon the brow of a hill, prayers were said by the minister, responded to by the assembled friends, and the sweetest anthems filled the air, amongst them some of her own particular liking, and when quiet was restored, and the friends had departed, birds hopped from branch to branch on the lovely bushes planted under her own supervision, and cared for by her dainty fingers, when she visited the spot which hid away so many of her loved ones. Their soft chirpings seemed to be an offering of peace and resignation to the dejected hearts left to confront the trials of life.

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The sun was setting in all of its glory behind that beautiful sod-covered hill, forever more to be the casket of the remains of their loved ones, and in time to come to shelter them, when they left and returned to a home, which until she was called away, was the dearest spot on earth; now the one over which a pall of dejection was shed.

Womanly fortitude soon caused his sister to aid him in adjusting family matters and following to the letter the wishes of the departed one. When the will was read it was found that the father's wishes, expressed many years before his death to his wife, were that a certain box in the safe deposit should not be opened until after the death of his wife.

It required tools to open it, done in the presence of the children and executors, disclosing to them documents of surprisingly great value. They had always lived in affluence, denied nothing, and were classed amongst the most favored, but now amazement would poorly describe their position. Messages of the most urgent nature were sent to Bradley and he finally responded personally to the call. Stocks and bonds of untold value came to light, as well as papers showing large property interests in the Highlands, taxes which had been prepaid for many years, and all sat about this prodigious disclosure, almost aghast with astonishment.

Not long after their right to the Highland property was disputed, taking the interests into court and disclosing the fact that the opponent was of periodic unsound mind, and while claiming relationship with the McLauds, it could never be traced, but as is ever the case, a lawyer of no repute, with noth-

ing to lose, but much to gain, was handling the case.

Amongst other interests there was a home in the Highlands, long since so covered with mosses and vines as to hide it from view, and surveyors were employed to unearth it, bringing to light a stone building of thirty apartments, and once a tower, which exposure to the elements most likely had caused disintegration to set in, and finally crumbling away fell upon a part of the walls, leaving a wreck of them. It had been a stately mansion with perhaps generations of stories back of it. What to do with this was a question of importance and while it remained unanswered they came across a sealed envelope, addressed to "My children of heirs."

Its enclosure told the tale of the once-called castle that had once belonged to Reinhart, Bradley and Mary's great-grandfather, a veritable libertine, who had only had two sons and when they obtained manhood left home in disgust, with sufficient means to give them a start in life, but not until their mother, a woman of high rank and standing, had passed away of a broken heart. The owner led a life of entire abandon, having no sense of the proprieties of life, bringing hither the most dissolute characters, and spending days and weeks of rollicking and debauchery.

After this life had long continued, queer noises were heard through the house, squeaking of doors, loud knockings, footsteps, rattling of chains, etc., even extinguishing of lights, and everyone fled from the castle, no money would have induced the domestics to remain, nor did the once welcome visitors continue in search of pastime. Indeed, tenants fled

far and wide, with the saying that the house was haunted, and oftentimes brightly illuminated. One went so far as to say that her mistress' face sometimes appeared at the window of her room, with angels' heads about it, and would pass away accompanied by a sigh heard at a great distance.

The owner managed to retain one half-witted man, to whom he made such alluring promises that fright was kept under control. There was a cave beneath this house, where treasures were buried, and frequent nocturnal visits were made to it. Upon one of them, a large piece of mortar fell upon the imbecile, causing such fright that he died shortly after, and then McLaud was left alone. He had been a man of learning, and this life was beyond further endurance, so locking and barring all means of ingress and egress he departed, sending news to his sons to the effect that treasures lay hidden within, which he should never come forward to claim, but that the house was haunted, as was indeed his soul. This was the last news ever received from their grandfather, but the father had been a prosperous man and kept the history of his father's life a secret of which he was truly ashamed. Reinhart and Bradley continued to regard it as a sacred trust and for the present would make no effort to dive into the secrets of the dead.

All claims of the imposter were soon thrown out of court and this disturbing element quieted.

For the present Bradley had done all that could be required, so he hastened home, having most anxious feelings about his wife, whom he left ailing. The vessel landed at such an hour that there was a

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likelihood of its not going into port until the following morning. This suspense was more than Bradley felt he could endure, so that a conference was held with the Captain, and a statement that at any cost he must land that night, brought to his rescue a pilot boat, which enabled him to reach home and be with his wife during the most trying hours of any woman's life. At sight of him her courage revived, and the doctors felt that his appearance had saved her from death, and given to them another little daughter who would bear her dear mother's name, while preventing lifelong self-reproaches with him.

Nothing makes one so radiantly beautiful as true happiness, and this was what Dorothy was now experiencing, causing her husband to invoke a prayer of thanks while he gazed with supreme delight upon his wife and life's partner. Their child was a dear, and already it was whispered she would be just like her Daddy, the wish of Dorothy's heart. So far little Bradley and Annita, confined to the top floor, had not been seen, but when they were, radiance shone from each face, though not yet could they see little sister.

When Dorothy's condition permitted, all of her husband's experiences were related, and the fear indulged in that they would have to go to Scotland and be in his old home while matters were being straightened out. "For never again, dear love, must we be parted." What more blissful statement could be made to a fond and loving wife?

Business claimed all of the attention he could spare from his wife for sometime. Papers had gone far and wide, rumoring the news about his inherit-

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ance, and his partner congratulated him most sincerely, for they were as well the best of friends and the most congenial business men. Letters from abroad were not only laden with grief, for the loss of a mother is irreparable, but also with great surprises, caused by the manner in which their father had conducted all money matters. The belief was that he wanted to protect his children against themselves, that they might never come to want.

In Scotland, around the time-honored chimney, plans were discussed, as well as in New York,—with sweet children's voices crying out in mirth; for the wisest means of unearthing the mystery of their ancestors, and it would require a full concourse of all interested parties before a plan of action could be determined upon. Time must be allowed for the happy little mother to grow strong enough for such an upheaval of home interests as would be required for an indefinite stay abroad, and as she felt there were anxious hearts on the other side, she was careful, prudent and ever watchful over herself.

But the ways of Providence are inscrutable, and before Dorothy was sufficiently herself to cross the ocean, a sojourn to Atlantic City was necessary that she might be fortified by the sea air; in fact a loss of the pleasure of nursing her own child was threatened her. But Bradley took her and little sister with a faithful nurse, and located them where all the benefits of the sea air and baths could be had, and under the most skilled care, she was allowed to leave America and go where urgent matters called her husband earlier than had been anticipated, and

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that without abandoning one of the greatest joys of a mother and pride of a father.

When the season came around, Auntie and the boys, Arthur and James, were to go to Benvenuta, where all rural pleasures could be partaken of, and if good luck followed them they might be joined before the season ended. A family of four grown persons and three children is no small undertaking to travel with, but intelligent and well-trained children facilitated matters, and Scotland was reached in good time, and all were in fine shape.

Bradley's sister was overjoyed by having all, and Reinhart proved himself to be a love of a man, with all peculiarities entirely mastered, and judgment ripened to the fullest extent, which enabled them to commence forthwith unearthing the mystery that no man would ever account for, save on the ground of insanity; which however was not the case for their ancestor had been traced to a monastery of one of the most austere orders, where through his writings upon theological subjects he had proven himself a man of brains, and continued repentance for his life's sin and shame, brought him in time to a very saintly death.

An extended trip was planned by the two brothers, for they had determined to have any excavating deemed necessary done, and when they parted with the dear ones, all manner of instructions were given for their comfort and care, should anything occur.

It was a beautiful old home, with few pretenses of modern improvements but every comfort available, and all evidences of refinement and good breeding, tracing back to time immemorial. Their sister, Mary, a name as sweet as herself, strove from the be-

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ginning to keep happy recollections of her mother ever present to their minds, and talked much of her to little Bradley and Annita. The little ones were full of questions and did not tire of hearing about their grandmother in heaven. Dorothy and Baby Dorothy flourished in that healthful climate, making themselves beloved by Mary, who could not bear to think of the day when they should be parted.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE brothers reached the old castle, for such it really was, and passages were found almost equalling the catacombs; but, lo! now they seemed to strike a spring, and above it were inscribed letters, which with difficulty, the work of many days, were deciphered as penning the Latin words, "Cave Cave," meaning, "beware! take care."

Now they came to that halt which prudence suggested, for soon it was found that water was there of some depth, and at the bottom of this they discovered the iron chest, so heavy that even when the earth about it was loosened up it required ten men to handle it. How this was ever to be raised to transport above ground was an important question; even were it opened there its contents might not facilitate matters, so that dragging by means of chains was resorted to, until an opening of some size was reached; and then came the tug of war: A pulley and a chain was the only idea that presented itself as practicable, for what other means could be found for rescuing that which promised so gloriously, and yet might be a mere phantom—we could say.

At the approach of night the house was closed as well as might be, and all departed, for carrying the chest away, or likewise opening it, would be a Herculean task. And still, there was an evil-eyed man amongst them, the thought of whom compelled the brothers to return after being assured by a person who seemed to be an honest man, that he would bring them food and raiment, as well as light, from the nearest village.

The dampness of the place made it cold, the

darkness uncanny. Both men were secretly armed, for they knew not what their experiences would be, and waiting patiently the rich reward promised brought its fruit, and the faithful man not only returned with what was secured, but stayed and kept them company during the long hours of the night, when he entertained them with the ghost stories about the place handed down to posterity, always adding, "But I did not believe them," presumably fearing to offend them. And still any rattling about the house, yea, even more, rustling of the leaves would cause him to start and look about him—so much a long communion tends to make us what we are.

Morning came and the dawning of day over these beautiful ruins was picturesque, causing the man to say, "Why not let the house continue a mass, vine covered in ruin; with its natural crumbling and decay it would be one of history's long-to-be-remembered ruins, perpetuating the name of the McLaud clan?"

By night, with ceaseless work, the chest had been hauled to the railroad, the assisting men well paid, and under express guard it remained until further examinations of the castle should take place.

Time had caused the contents of the house, for the most part, to fall to pieces and crumble away, leaving ashes over which one might have wept, for there were garments which could they have spoken, the shreds of them might have told tales. Pieces of metal—whether silver, copper or brass, was not to be known—still stood in some cases and were gath-

ered together and taken away to be tested as worthy or not of preservation.

After the house had been thoroughly gone over, and anything of sufficient consistency found was carried off, the place was abandoned for the havoc of time to do its work; and the children of many generations to gaze upon and tell every imaginable tale of the haunted house.

There was a fortune in these rich lands for their descendants, and as far as the eye could reach the scenery was so beautiful that one could not marvel at its selection for a place of abode.

The trip had been a very hard one, but when the chest and other belongings had been placed in the hands of the express company for safe delivery at their home, it would seem their work was at an end. Seated at the depot awaiting the train, who should loom up before them but the evil-eyed man, with whom Bradley conversed, giving Reinhart a chance to study him, and learning that his life was a hard one, ill luck pursuing him, they were generous, but to find that notwithstanding, Brother Reinhart's pocket had been picked and no small amount secured.

Once upon the train the queer fellow was discussed, Bradley saying he would not trust him out of sight; Reinhart that he was only a poor unfortunate, etc., but reaching over his head in the car for something, Bradley discovered his brother's trouser pockets slit far down, and upon investigation his purse and some loose paper money had disappeared.

"There," said Bradley, "is your poor unfortunate; a sneak of the very first water; an evil eye

always prejudices me, and on no account will I have dealings with any but honest-eyed people.”

His brother was amused, while admitting that his own judgment was at fault; but there were no lamentations over the loss, presumably appreciating that from their valuable coffers they could well stand the loss without murmuring against fate.

A violent storm overtook them en route home, causing much damage to property of all kinds, not the least to the trees, which cannot be replaced by those of any great size. The tracks were submerged for miles and trees blown across them, as well as wires down and greatly tangled. This prevented communication with their family, who naturally were all wrought up and immensely disturbed. Fortunately, the loss of life was small and, of course, for this all were most grateful.

You can readily fancy the warm welcome which awaited them upon their reaching home and the very lengthy conversations which ensued. It really took days to relate their experiences, and now came the anxious time awaiting such things as had been shipped; most important of all the chest, the contents of which were still as a sealed book to them.

While putting in the ensuing time, there was much business to be handled, papers to be gone over, and a decision come to about the old home, which was too spacious for only two to occupy, and yet there was that old Scotch feeling of tenacity about it (so unlike America) which made them shrink from disposing of it, and if closed, it would go to rack and ruin. So the thing determined upon was to procure a suitable tenant and lease it until such time as the

brother and sister would care to occupy it again. Meanwhile, plans as to their place of locating might be determined upon, but the old home must never pass out of their possession.

Dorothy was given an opportunity of becoming familiar with her husband's home country, and while so doing she learned to love it, and the good, staunch people whom she met.

The children thrived and became immensely sturdy, which was most pleasing to their parents, as is always the case, for fine physical condition adds greatly to personal charm and attraction.

At the expiration of a week the express wagon came, driving very slowly, for they were seldom called upon to handle such weighty matter, and bringing along three men beside the driver. The question as to what disposition should be made of the chest upon its receipt had been a momentous one, as it could not be handled in the house, and therefore a part of the barn was made in readiness for its reception; even a couch for the one to be put on guard placed therein; all ingress and egress were made perfectly secure, and now upon its receipt there was no flurry; indeed a case of bricks could not have been handled more nonchalantly. It was about twilight when the wagon had been unloaded, the men well paid for their weighty handling, and went off greatly pleased.

The late hour made them abstain from all efforts at opening the ponderous thing then, but the articles in metal were many of them pronounced solid silver, and of such grandeur as to make their owners swell with pride upon beholding them in better shape.

The evening was largely spent in determining how to go about having the chest opened; the vote was in favor of the blacksmith and he arrived at an early hour with all the necessary implements. It was not a matter of rapid process, indeed many hours were required before the lid gave way. Lock and bolts were so rusted as to make opening through that channel entirely impossible and when the master blacksmith had accomplished his work he looked up, with beads of perspiration standing out upon his brow, and gave a gratified smile of triumph. His work was generously rewarded and he went his way leaving the family of four to dive into the chest of mysteries, more than four generations old.

Seated before it, many thicknesses of old, musty paper were removed, and then came packages all of which were laid out in order, intending to open none until the chest was emptied. But lo! a sealed envelope of parchment came to light, and it gave instructions which were followed to the letter. This was evidence that it contained a mine of wealth, comparable to Golconda, perchance. Each package or box was numbered and the further down they got the more surprised they were. Such had been their astonishment that they marveled at the chest not having a false bottom.

The grandfather of the McLauds had been a man of whom little or nothing was known, beyond that he was insupportably eccentric, and shunned by all people at large. Much of his wealth was presumably handed down, but again much of it was acquired in a merciless way, and upon his death, his son, the one who last occupied the castle, before leaving it

had buried the chest about which we have just been reading.

There were rare jewels, diamonds, pearls, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, etc., etc., to begin with and costly other jewels of rare design; some silverware with the family coat of arms, amongst that even gold pieces, which added greatly to the weight, and caused them to sit about nonplussed and wondering why it was that these things should have been kept a secret from that dearest of mothers and noblest of women, who would have had the greatest sympathy and pity for the libertine who ultimately died so saintly a death.

The document accompanying these articles found in the chest, letter form, addressed simply to his heirs or those into whose hands the chest might chance to fall, if not in a legitimate way, was of a positive nature that divulged no family secrets, and finished by saying his was to be a life of atonement, and prayers that none of his blood should follow in his footsteps.

The more closely the treasures were examined the more beautiful they were found, but secrecy must be maintained about them as far as possible, so that when any questions were asked of the chest, it was spoken of as one of the freaks of their ancestor, causing much trouble with but little compensation.

It was a case of having so much wealth and worldly belongings that peace of mind was denied them. Before all matters had been settled they had been over three months absent from home, and a sort of homesick feeling for beautiful Benvenuta, that they all loved so well, took possession of them, and

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when the time for departure was determined upon even Bradley, with whom home could never be the same without his beloved mother, was secretly glad to be off, though would welcome his brother and sister in America. It was a sad parting indeed, as everything had been done for their comfort, but such trials come to us all, and courage is a trait in our characters which should not be neglected, for who can tell when it may be required.

CHAPTER XXV

THEY reached New York after a most uneventful voyage upon an uninterestingly crowded vessel, and reaching the city lost no time in directing their steps to Benvenuta, where their hearts went out in rapturous delight in fact, once in sight of the Hudson River, they were more than beaming. How much more so within the enclosure of their own grounds.

That evening a serenade was given them and even the children were permitted to be hilarious, beginning the morrow with the merriest of hearts.

Auntie, Arthur and James were very happy to welcome them home and had all their summer's experiences to relate, as against those they could overjoy them with.

Again the season was far advanced before they departed for the city; indeed it was only upon the doctor's advice, on account of baby Dorothy, that they abandoned the happy country life mapped out for themselves—so different from the pretense and ostentation lived up to in New York.

Their share of jewels was brought away with them, but when the storehouse of elegance, which had been sent to Tiffany to be polished, after their long interment, arrived at their city house, curious and gratified friends came to enjoy seeing them and offer their congratulations over such good luck. It must be admitted they added greatly to the elegance of their home, though as is always the case, increased responsibility. Being heirlooms they naturally must be sacredly cared for, as they were only entrustments.

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One day shortly after they returned to the city, who should Bradley meet not far distant from his home, but the evil-eyed man, who tried to evade his scrutiny—however, unsuccessfully, for Bradley walked straight to him and said, “Why are you here?”

Whereupon he pretended not to know Bradley and said he was from Boston.

Bradley left him but soon thereafter put a detective on his trail and notified them at home to be particularly careful.

The man not infrequently crossed Bradley’s pathway until he was satisfied that finding of the chest had more or less to do with his appearance then and there.

One evening while the family were at dinner the maid discovered him in Dorothy’s room and when she screamed he sprang from the window, which landed him upon a shed in the rear, from whence he climbed down, but not until Bradley had shot him in the leg, and then going forward identified him as the man of the evil eye, who met with justice and was long confined in prison, where it was found not to have been the first time he was dubbed “the man with the evil eye,” as he had led a life of a reprobate and was then wanted in Chicago.

Bradley is now more than ever suspicious of everyone with an evil eye—one blinking and winking instead of showing a straightforward, clean, unflinching presence.

News from Scotland was to the effect that matters were moving smoothly with them and a desirable party, Lord W——, was about to close a

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lengthy lease of their homestead and grounds, upon most satisfactory terms.

Their own plans were not at all formulated; possibly they would spend some time in traveling. This latter Bradley highly approved of. Their sister was not young, nor was she old, from the English standpoint; most intelligent and accomplished; quite good looking, with distingue carriage and an unusual fortune. This is never a drawback, but so far she had sacrificed her life to her mother, once refusing a very desirable party who subsequently died. Now the brothers were in hopes that some man of influence should come her way, and thus fill a life so far devoted to noble cause.

Dorothy's sweetness of nature prompted her to suggest her coming to America to be with them. Bradley thought it best to let them see the world, his sister having lived in rather a narrow sphere, and this would broaden her ideas and aid in dispelling the cloud of dejection under which she was then existing. "He jests at scars who never felt a wound," and with her sensitive nature suffering was acute. We are told to have joy one must share it—happiness must be born a twin. As long as her mother lived she asked for nothing more, but now it was feared if she found no suitable companion she might enter some religious order; for while she loved Reinhart, they were very opposite natures, seeing things from totally different standpoints, and it was to be feared that they would jar upon each other.

Bradley said, "Experience is the best teacher, so let them formulate their own lives without interference, and we will watch for the outcome."

During the period of mourning they led the most quiet, deferential lives, devoting themselves to their family, both immediate and otherwise; seeing their friends in a quiet way, and Dorothy brightened the scene around the cheerful hearthstone with her sweet soft voice—always full of pathos, and sometimes causing her husband to wonder if all traces of her sad past life were wiped from the present one. He felt that her noble instincts would prompt her to consider him “of whom much is given, much is expected,” and he was sure she would banish any unwholesome thoughts, giving to those about her and enjoying God’s blessings.

The more Bradley thought over matters the more thoroughly he was satisfied that he would be obliged to pay frequent visits to his old home, for some time to come, but never again would he be parted from his wife, and with such a helpmate as Auntie—who had endeared herself to everyone—Elise, Bradley’s nurse; Eliza, Annita’s nurse; and now for little Dorothy, Hermine (what a mixture—French, Irish and German!) there seemed no necessity for anxiety.

He must afford his wife a better opportunity of seeing the Land of Lassies and Laddies. A short visit to Edinburgh (which is called “Auld Reekie” from its great smokiness), stopping at the Waterloo Hotel, which would enable them to enjoy the picturesque-ness of the city, surrounded on three sides by high hills, where the finest views may be had. The castle is on one side of a rock fully two hundred feet high. Edinburgh has no manufacturing industry. The city is built of stone. In the palace may still be found the bed of Mary Queen of Scots, al-

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though in a greatly decayed state. On the Prince Street a Gothic Tabernacle erected as a monument to Sir Walter Scott may be seen.

In Scotland she must enjoy finnan haddie—such as one does not find in America.

All who are interested in Scott and Burns must at least have some knowledge of Scotland. She must see the churches, museums, and the beautiful libraries; Melrose, the Abbey of Abbotsford, the Silver Tweed—all made sacred and poetical by Scott.

At least this much she must see upon our next trip, before we go to our old home near Glasgow—and sweet Inverness—how could I forget that. All these plans must be carried out in the months that do not deprive us of our loved Benvenuta, hallowed to us by sorrow's sting, as well as the delights of happiness. Every spot along that beautiful, historic river is alive with interest to me, and shall be for mine.

The Turks say, "Who seeks a friend without a fault remains without one," so those who expect perfection in any land must needs be disappointed, but the Hudson is to my mind, with all its beautiful scenery, magnificent mansions belonging to noted people, so fine a body of water that it cannot be surpassed, and Benvenuta may hold her head high, as it is a land of dreams.

CHAPTER XXVI

LITTLE Albert, who was now a fine large boy, after his father died presented himself at Bradley's office one day, asking for a position that would help to gain him a livelihood. He was so changed that he had to tell Bradley who he was, and all of his life for some years past. It had been a sad one and his father had told him when his aunt, with whom he lived, thought him large enough, to go to Mr. McLaud and ask to be placed anywhere to help him to become a man. Years of severe illness had eaten into his father's savings, leaving Albert with a mere pittance, but he was such a manly little fellow that Bradley was won over to him and remembered how his good resolutions to keep track of them had failed him. Now he would be his friend, if the boy proved what he thought he would be. Therefore, he installed him at once and time proved him to be a fine, sturdy, manly boy, destined to climb the ladder of success, with which efforts Bradley's manly instincts prompted him to lend an assisting hand.

By the time they were ready to start off on their second honeymoon, little Albert, who went regularly to night school, was able to send his individual reports to his employer, which he did with great pride and precision, showing that there was no doubt about his having the making of a man, and the knowledge of how to make friends, for Bradley's partner, as well, was interested in the boy. They landed at Liverpool, made a flying trip through London, and then carried out his plans of letting his wife see some-

thing of Scotland, beyond the confines of his old home, Glasgow.

After going over what was considered their extensive domains, the brothers conceived the idea of conferring with lawyers of note and standing to ascertain whether their rights to the property had not been forfeited by the fact of such a great lapse of time, and finding that their fears were not groundless, they resolved to purchase what had belonged to their forefathers, and through well-selected tenants, establish for themselves a landed revenue. Stocks and bonds after such an expiration of time, were valueless, but such unheard of good luck had come their way, that no feeling of disappointment found vent within them, and when the purchasing papers had been signed affording that much more wealth to the country, their attentions were directed to the usually generous, causing them to turn their faces homeward with peace and joy of heart.

They went to Aberdeen in the northeast; to Inverness in the northwest. These two places seemed to satisfy them all and there they remained until time for setting sail for America, where the brother and sister accompanied them to the vessel sailing for America, and the parting was less sad for the tie of true devotion had been cemented, and they loved each other as never before.

The passage home was not altogether smooth, but there were no accidents and arrival in New York only deferred for one day and night, which caused no anxiety for the time of their arrival in New York only deferred for one day and night,

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which caused no anxiety for the time of their arrival had purposely not been given.

It was a dear, sweet time that they spent together, growing closer than ever to each other. Bradley told her that half of all he possessed was to be secured to herself and children at once; that come what might they would always be cared for handsomely, while he would strive to increase what he retained to operate with.

They spoke sometimes of dear Annita, when his heart would swell with emotion over the fact that his first love had been bestowed upon so beautiful and grand a woman, for he felt that any of her shortcomings had been more than paid for by her true repentance and devotion to him; for how had she not been made to suffer, dear soul.

Dorothy was generous enough to admit she might have been worse but for his guidance, and hand in hand, as the moon's bright light shone upon them, they asked her for a long continued watchfulness over them, as they left the deck that night, ending a never to be forgotten voyage.

When they reached Benvenuta, true joy prevailed, for they both loved and knew how to make themselves beloved.

From an account given of a strange man seen about Bradley was led to believe he was evil-eye, but for the present so great was his joy at again being with the darling children that he banished all but the greatest happiness, and while mama fondled baby, Daddy did the other two. All sat about the lunch table, a merry party of eight, who made things ring with cheerful voices and tales always to be re-

membered. But no boxes had been opened yet, and even the little ones were wondering what was coming; when stealthy steps were heard on the gravel without and Arthur said, "There he is, uncle!"

Bradley went forward and met him, greatly to his surprise, for he did not know of his return. Addressing him he said, "Evil-eye" (this caused the man to shudder), "if you are ever seen about these premises, even when I am here or not, your life will not be spared. A report from me to the detectives will send you back to your home of recent date, so be off, and that without my blessing." Not a word came from the sneak.

Now all repaired to mother's and daddy's rooms for the lovely gifts brought them. Baby's came first, a musical doll, which charmed her; then Annita's, a doll saying Mama and Papa, while moving her limbs; now Bradley's, a horse which collapsed, but when screwed up was strong enough for him to sit upon; then came James' pretty scarfs and fine handkerchiefs, with a gold piece. Arthur was no less fortunate in possession of a purse with a round sum of money, to invest as he chose when he went off to school again. This touched Aunty, for they were ever her parentless children. She got no end of things they knew would please her, and each servant was so handsomely remembered that when they departed the air rang with voices of true appreciation and happiness.

The time remaining for them to stop at beloved Benvenuta was not long, so that every moment of it must be joyous and all varieties of amusements indulged in with the zest of a real jolly country life.

Some nights, rather early evening, they would sit about the cheerful fire, Bradley telling wonderful fairy tales; then mother would sing soft, sweet, tender little songs, and tender good nights would be given, each child's nurse taking it away to be seen no more until morning, save when mother, upon tip-toe, would gaze fondly upon them.

Aunty was kind and gentle, so that she was respected, and there were no unpleasant reports to hand in, and life had been smooth and tranquil.

Soon James began attending school and he would accompany his uncle to town. Arthur had already gone, and his small fortune had made him the envy of the other boys.

The sight of snow fills all hearts with delight; in this case it was not longed for, however, as it would mean a return to the city, and even the little ones were willing to forego the pleasure of snowballing—anything not to have to give up the life that was so dear to them on the beautiful Hudson River. When the snow did come they begged for a few sleigh rides with lots of merry bells, before they should have to depart, and Daddy saw to it that their hearts' wish was gratified.

Now bidding the caretakers and family goodby, with the wish that they should have a happy winter, they were about leaving them when they saw little Bradley clinging to the old caretaker with tears in his eyes, saying, "Ich Schreibe,"—the little German he had learned. His sobs were only quieted by Karl's promise to visit him, and on the way the little fellow was truly pensive.

Ruskin tells us, "All one's life is music if one

teaches the notes rightly and in tune," so all one's life can be made happy if loving traits are inculcated. Ambition is but the shadow of a dream; why not direct it to the proper channel? is what thinking people are wont to say.

Through Bradley's constant solicitude for others, his ever-abiding desire to make people happy, the city house had been opened and put in proper condition to receive them, so that when they entered it, unlike most city ones, the logs could be heard crackling and the chimney sending forth through its bright fire a hearty welcome to the very long absentees.

This, too, was a very sweet home, and both father and mother realized it as they gazed about them.

Were I to tell you all the dear, sweet baby talk that passed between those three sweet little darlings, you would, I know, enjoy it; but how much further I should be from my closing chapters, and that too, at this stage of my book begins to inspire interest. Indeed, one is tempted to skip a few pages now and then just to see how it ends, and then go back and mend the links of the broken chain. May I hope that this will be the case with the present book and that Amen will not be said with great relief.

Their mourning would be lightened this winter and quiet society matters participated in. The opera, that both loved dearly, should be enjoyed; the theaters attended, and once seen at these places it would be understood that they were no longer absolute recluses, and in time their friends would again welcome them in their midst.

Dorothy's home life was all sufficient to her, but Bradley felt she was too young not to have some

social distractions, and while they would not feel like entertaining at home just yet, that would come in time. Now they would accept invitations extended them and with the beautiful jewels she had, gowns must be made correspondingly handsome, and what lovelier person could there be to set off the gowns?

Bradley was very proud of his flower of a wife, so attractive in every way and when she said, "Bradley," all that was noble was implied, so that there was no danger of their ever being corrupted by the snares of society, or straying from each other's confidence.

One thing drew them into another, until as the Lenten season approached they found themselves ready to hail it with delight. But now was the time for them to do themselves proud, which they did, giving a handsome opera and supper party at Sherry's, to all from whom they had accepted hospitality, and as Bradley did everything on a grand scale, this did not fall short of his previous undertakings, and it was pronounced a most elegant affair, with some little varieties introduced which were very pleasing.

Ash Wednesday was an occasion of great relief to them and they intended using this holy season as a most refreshing excuse for retirement from a whirl of fatiguing excitement. Their first really happy, peaceful and restful evening at home was truly relished; drawing their chairs near the fire and having very little light save what was produced by it, they compared the comforts and satisfaction of true home life with the frivolities and shallowness of society life, and determined that the path of the latter would never be satisfying to them.

If distractions be considered salutary, then why not have them of the nature of salons, where cultured people congregate, as in the days of the distinguished French women of old; to vie with each other in the display of elegance and wit of which one never tires. That was an incentive to the embellishing of one's brain power, and why should not ambition be inspired anew and taste for a higher standard of morality inculcated in a world where fortune permitted the attaining of heart's every desire.

“If another season finds us in New York, an effort with this end in view might be conducive of bringing thoughtful and ambitious people together, and a taste acquired would ripen into something commanding respect, while affording genuine pleasure. What say you to this dear? Is it not a good idea?”

“There are women of talents in these days as those of yore, but a love of pleasure causes them to abandon self-advancement to sensual gratification, and no thought is given to one's aggrandizement. I love them all in their natural grace and beauty, and behold them oftentimes with pleasure, then again with pity, for their strong points are dominated by their weak ones, and God's endowments are hidden beneath the veil of never-ending pleasure seeking.”

“Now, dear, it is time for us to retire, as the grate is full of smouldering embers and the shadows dance merrily about your face, affording me an opportunity to behold it in all of its motherly beauty, and I shall offer my prayer of thanks, while saying,

‘I pray thee, chide not she whom I love now,
Doth grace for grace, and love for love allow.’”

CHAPTER XXVII

AS THEY were about to mount the stairs the front doorbell rang. It was rather a late hour, and consequently a little startling. Upon opening it Bradley was confronted by an officer who asked if he knew anything of a person seated on the lower step, who seemed to be in a state of stupor, without any evidence of accident.

Bradley replied, "No, but may I look at him?" He made no remark but was possessed of the idea that he was the man with the evil eye, and believed the stupor a ruse. "The lock-up is the best place for him in my opinion, and before his discharge, I have a reason for wishing to see him, if that be permitted." This was said *sub rosa*, quite apart, but carried its meaning.

That night when his wife was asleep and perfect quiet prevailed Bradley gave the man a careful going over in his mind, and all of a sudden he said, "What if it were Charles?" The thought staggered him, but the more he dwelt upon it, the more possible he considered it. He was the same height, the same build, and if not tampered with, of the same coloring. An accident might have altered the expression of the eye and he was villain enough to wish to destroy his former wife's and his happiness.

Sleep was out of the question, so he crept quietly from the room and going to his den resolved upon his course of action for the following day. At breakfast his wife remarked that he looked rather weary, and he laughed and said, "I had a sleepless night, which is often the case when we permit our thoughts

to gain the mastery over us. My coffee and the bracing morning air will make me all right again."

But Dorothy's was a penetrating judgment and this did not satisfy her. Kissing him good morning she said, "Don't fret, it will be just as you want it, dear; things always come your way."

"Of course, they do, sweet one, and I may be home in time for a turn in the park, with the children as well. Oh, what a beautiful morning!" and away he went with his usual brisk steps to the police headquarters, where he told his business and was promised an opportunity of seeing the man as soon as possible.

Bradley then went to his office earlier than usual, but there sat faithful Albert, with his happy, beaming face, ready to greet his benefactor, who became daily fonder of the young fellow with such manly instincts as to be respected by everyone, and who had the promise of no slow rise. He had already been advanced twice and at that early hour was posted about the markets and able to tell Bradley many things of interest.

Shortly things began to be brisk and to put on a lively aspect, but as luck should have it, just when Bradley was most needed, a policeman called for him and when Albert saw him starting off, he stepped in front with the question, "Can't I attend to it, Mr. McLaud?" and there was a positive expression of dismay upon his face. Bradley laughed, as did the policeman, and answered him there was no cause for alarm and he would return shortly.

Arriving at the station where the man was detained, Bradley was soon convinced that he was not

only evil-eye, but Charles, whom he scanned with looks of such complete disgust that the man felt the secret of his identity was divulged, and like a coward, began to cringe, and with his eyes plead for mercy.

Bradley reflected long upon the matter, knowing it would be death from humiliation for his wife, were she to learn of it, and yet, it was a hard case to handle with the police without exposing mortifying circumstances. Finally he said to them, "I am the only person whom this person has wronged and if you will let me have a few words with him, I may avert trouble for you, myself, and not the least, him."

No one could doubt the honesty of a man of Bradley's type, so stepping outside of the door, they closed it and left them face to face. Charles, like the undenied coward that he was, fell upon his knees and before words had passed his lips, was ordered to rise.

Then Bradley said, "Is it not enough to have brought the greatest unhappiness upon a woman who once loved you, and was true to you, and did not interfere with you in your choice of life? Now what would you have of her, as a noble wife? Is it your purpose to pursue her to the grave while you are leading the life of a reprobate, having stained the name of an honored family, by taking from it a woman who now supports you by the charm her voice has for the public? But for my wish to spare my wife mortification — nothing else — for you have sunken to the lowest degradation in her mind, and she fancies you long since passed away — I should

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give you over into the hands of the law and let fate take its course.

As it is, first you must answer my question as to what happened to your eye: A blow upon it, most likely, has changed its expression, and entitled you to the name of evil-eye, which well befits you.

Now, where is Louise? — in England? and what brought you to this country? Perchance to cause us trouble? This, by the love I bear my maker, you shall not do, and unless you leave this country forthwith, never to return to it without being at once thrown into prison, I shall hand you over now with a history of all the dark deeds of your life, and before you leave this room your picture will be taken and held for future evidence. What have you to say?"

"That you are unmerciful."

"Why should I be otherwise with one of earth's deepest dyed villains?"

"I must have money before departing."

"Your person will be examined, and if needs, you will be sent abroad as a steerage passenger, but I am convinced you are not penniless. Time presses; do my terms suit you? Answer, yes or no."

"Yes."

"Then you must be examined."

"Never: I am ready to depart if accorded a few hours to myself."

"Never: a detective will escort you where you wish to go, but you will never be out of his sight until the vessel leaves port, and even then the pilot who takes the boat across the bar will not cease to keep a careful watch over you."

A few moments of silence and then, "Well, if I must, so let it be."

Bradley opened the door, asked to have his picture taken and then told the terms upon which he was to leave the country by first vessel leaving port. The only questions asked were, "Has he been a murderer or a robber?"

"Neither, gentlemen, and I alone am the sufferer from his wrong doings." "Let your future life be a cleaner one than your past one has been, is my farewell."

A few words with the officers and a promise from them to do his bidding, and a report to him when he was on the broad blue sea, ended that day's chapter, and sent Bradley out wondering if it might not be a case of his hair growing white in a single night, "Too early seen unknown, and known too late."

Albert's face beamed with delight when he saw Bradley enter, but he was quick to discover worry, so he sent for sandwiches and a glass of milk, thinking he might have forgotten to lunch, which was the case. The dear boy's care of his father, and now his aunt, no longer young, caused him to be considerate and tender with others.

When Bradley reached home that evening he had taken a Turkish bath to smooth out the lines of care. It was too late for the park, but with his dear ones about him he freshened up and said to little Bradley, resting on his knee, "My boy, it is Daddy's strongest hope that you may grow to be as fine a young man as Albert is," and then he related to his wife many admirable tales of a boy-man, who would soon

be alone in the world, for his aunt was too feeble to last long, alas! for him!

Not many days later a detective called at Bradley's office to tell him what had been learned of his dealings with Evil-eye. He said, "I took him to be a man who was a deteriorated gentleman. He spoke but little, yet what he said gave me that impression; only he was not truthful and he had ample money to secure his passage, and wanted to mislead you. He was stopping in a modest lodging house where he paid his bill, but before he entered he begged me not to give him away, but to act as if he were a friend. The most displeasing feature was his having a large bottle of whiskey from which he drank freely, after offering it to me; and in pulling money from his pocket he dropped a fine diamond stud, which I picked up, thus having a chance to see it well and realize it was a gem of value. Well sir, your orders were obeyed to the letter and now he is on the broad blue sea, if he has not jumped from the vessel, and I take it he is not of the brave kind."

Bradley thanked him while giving him a handsome reward, and drew a long breath of relief. Dorothy certainly did love him, but how little appreciation she had of how he guarded her against every saddening influence, and strove untiringly to fill her life with the sunshine of happiness.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DURING the Lenten season they saw very little of society and sometimes she would insist upon his taking her somewhere out of the city over Sunday, because she felt the need of a change; and then they were so absolutely together that it was most refreshing.

Aunty's being with them was certainly a great comfort, enabling them to have many pleasures which without her would have been denied them.

One week they visited friends at South Orange, whose little ones were about to have a party, and, of course, that was the subject of conversation; but it would only be their neighbors, as distances were to be avoided in the cold weather. However, the lady was a great friend of Dorothy's and received from her many pleasing suggestions; ideas conceived in their extensive travels which enhanced the charm of the entertainment, and made her remember it as one to confer with on all similar occasions.

When they returned to the city on one of the evenings of their quiet *tete-a-tetes*, Bradley said, "Don't you think by the month of August, when *Benvenuta* is so beautiful, we might have a gathering of little ones to pass the day with ours, giving them a new joy and bringing them together with our friends' children?"

"Yes, dear, but how could that be done?"

"Simply enough, by having a special morning train to bring them to us and an evening one to return them to their homes. Let us count how many there would be."

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This done, some names scratched, others added, the list at first only ran to thirty, but by and by to forty.

“Well, that number we can plan to take care of. Most likely there will be some falling off, but I think we can make a veritable fairy scene of it, which will ever remain fresh in their memories. But for the present it had better not be spoken of; discussions so far ahead are apt to lose their snap.”

Little Bradley's birthday was to be a memorable occasion to the children as a child's jaunting car was driven up to the house by a man quite undersized and seeming to fit the place perfectly. His livery was attractive, and the little ones piled in with Elise, who, in her French *bonne's* costume, added to the charm of the picture, and Daddy and Mother followed in the automobile, to be witnesses to the joy afforded them. The entire turnout was so complete and pleasing, the trap filled with such lovely children, to whom as much attention was paid as is to the goat wagons on the Champs Elysee in Paris, and was enjoyed by everyone.

In the evening came the regulation birthday cake, when Bradley was most fearful lest someone should extinguish the life candle. As is always the case, each member of the household partook of it with the best wishes for the young master, and no doubt their dreams were sweet and their hearts overjoyed.

As spring approached, Bradley purchased two fine riding horses and he and his wife prepared to enjoy a gallop through the park in the early morning when the birds' music was sweetest and there was no bustle. It was long since Dorothy had ridden,

so that she took a few lessons, but soon showed her aptitude and perfect ease in the saddle. They rode frequently when the weather permitted, but one morning about the season for preparation for return to Benvenuta, they had a fine gallop and were nearing home, when Dorothy's horse slipped and fell, fracturing her arm quite badly, and her being brought into the house was a shock to all of the inmates.

The finest surgical skill was called to attend her and shortly she was made quite comfortable; and then Bradley admitted her silent suffering had been his greatest shock.

Their departure for the country was hastened, as the doctor said quiet would aid in restoring her more rapidly, since the nerves had been shattered.

The sale of the horse was discussed, but Dorothy claimed she was riding with a slack rein and entirely to blame, as the animal was not in the least a stumbling one, and her wishes were respected to have Hero grow to love her as all others did, and to wag his tail with delight at the sound of her voice.

The recovery was an absolute one, and though she was timid in mounting at first, she overcame the feeling and derived great pleasure afterwards; the more so when little Bradley could ride along side of her on his little Shetland; which they often did through the beautiful enclosure of Benvenuta.

Albert, whose aunt had recently passed away, was given a much needed holiday, for he had attended her faithfully during her illness, and was asked to spend it with them, which he gladly did, making himself useful, beloved and sympathized with, so that all hated to see him depart; none more so than young

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Bradley, and Bradley's father interested himself in seeing that he selected a home out of the range of contamination, for he wanted him to remain with clean young men as long as possible. He was promised a day and night's holiday when the little ones should have their lawn party, for he had grown to love them all, perhaps little Bradley the most, for he never forgot his recollections of "the pretty lady," who was Bradley's own mother.

He had been told that until Bradley should be able to appreciate he was as dear to her as her own, he was never to know anything of Dorothy's not being his mother, and his good sense told him it was far happier thus.

The best month for the event in the children's lives was discussed, and it was thought June, with their garden always so full of the most beautiful roses, would be the most pleasing time, besides which, later on there would be a scattering of friends, many not to return before the first frost had blighted the beauty of the many rare plants and shed an inhospitable chill over things. The foliage might be varied and beautiful, but where would the delightful perfume of flowers be? So June was settled upon, and now all experienced heads must get to work with suggestions which presented themselves to mind, for this was to be a memorable occasion, not only for the little ones, but for all persons far and wide, to enjoy from hearsay, if not from participation.

One evening not long after orders had been given, and many parties were busy as bees, Dorothy found Bradley down in one of the summer houses all alone, in a most pensive mood. Approaching lightly, she

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stood before him ere he was aware of her presence, and beheld upon his face the saddest expression, indicating great fullness of heart. Soon she was seated at his side and holding his hand, she found he was going over in mind all the grand preparations which had been made there prior to his marriage with Annita, and how they were nipped in the bud by the accident which befell him; and the subsequent weeks passed there during his convalescing. How happy they had been, and then how the shadow of Death had cast its gloom over them when she was taken from him, and now, Oh, how true that time is a healer for all pain.

“But Dorothy dear, with me it will never be forgotten nor my love for her memory lessened, and sometimes my pain and anguish is most poignant. But that does not lessen my love for you, only I cannot quell the rush of my brain’s fevered thoughts. This was the very spot where we sat the last time she walked with me. So often before you brightened my life I would catch my self saying, ‘You are looked for and called for; asked for and sought for.’ Now when I am alone with her I say, ‘Your guidance is prayed for,’ and this, my dear, does not arouse jealousy, I know, for you are all in all to me.”

Walking away together, plans for the entertainment were soon being discussed and the little ones’ smiles and caresses brushed away every semblance of care and made Daddy even romp and play with them, as a boy, when he found them awaiting him on the lawn near their lovely house.

When the little ones had said good-night, and they sat alone on the piazza, Bradley thought his

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wife seemed troubled. Taking her hand, he said, "Was it not Goethe who wrote: 'Since time is not a person we can overtake when he is gone, let us honor him with mirth and cheerfulness of heart when he is passing.' " And the remainder of the evening had no semblance of dejection; but was full of most pleasant suggestions about beautifying all around them.

The 20th of June was the day set, and all was astir getting things in readiness for the momentous occasion, if only the elements would smile upon them. Replies to invitations came promptly and so far, no regrets. Mamas were arranging suitable toilets, as well among guests, as the host and hostesses, and if the tablets of little brains were laid bare before us, no doubt they would be well worth reading.

Time seemed to fly and many busy minds and active hands were smiling over their beautiful success, in plans well carried out, without stint as to their perfection. A special train was procured to bring them at noon and to take them away at five p. m. Automobiles, which were beautifully adorned with flowers, producing a gala effect, met them at the station, and the merry ringing voices of the little ones were more entrancing than the choicest music.

They had been placed in cars by footmen in the family livery, and as they drove into the grounds of Fairyland Benvenuta, a famous band of music filled the air with choicest strains, and beaming little faces paid their respects to the kind host and hostesses,—Bradley, Annita and Dorothy, all lovely children, upon whom heaven's choicest blessings had fallen.

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And now it became the duty of all the older ones to see that the little ones were kept joyous.

Bradley's brother and sister had arrived the previous day, and Mary, such a sweet woman by nature, entered into the spirit of it, saying constantly, "Could a more lovely picture be seen?"

Reinhart, in his quiet way, contributed to the life of the afternoon, and Albert was sought after from all directions, never failing Bradley's father, when needed by him.

While the sun shone brightly upon their arrival, towards three the outlook was threatening, but old Eliza, with usual Catholic faith, said, "Oh, no, it will not rain. I have long been praying for bright weather, and my prayer will be heard, sure. One good turn deserves another, and I have made my offering." Eliza's prayer was certainly heard, for all landed in their own homes before heaven's overflow reached the earth.

We read of dances upon the green, but in this case not only dancing, but games of all kinds were entered into by the little ones, who also partook of the most sumptuous repast, each carrying away something that would ever remind them of their little friends.

The whole city was talking of the beautiful, magnificent entertainment, surpassing anything ever known before in their midst, and one parent said, "We should be happy that they are blessed with affluence, for they allow others to enjoy it with them. This certainly will make the little McLauds popular and known as never before."

For days after this an effort was necessary to

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restore the Benvenuta little ones to calm and quiet. They were so jubilant that their little eyes danced like diamonds in their heads, and their ejaculations were about their friends, and everything that was amusing.

CHAPTER XXIX

ONCE things were restored to original order and life's regular routine established, Bradley told his brother about his experience with "Evil-eye," and they agreed that he had been on their track in disguise for some time.

"Moreover," said Reinhart, "I believe him to be a vicious fellow, who, while he may not venture to return here, beware of him if you ever cross to the other side. It is not so much money, for Louise,—who it would seem loves him, and is showered with adulation, jewels, and no doubt, even money independent of her earnings,—keeps him, I believe, abundantly supplied—quite likely to insure her own independence. But he is a malicious fellow and could not help respecting and admiring Dorothy as he never could a singer.

"I did not tell you that after returning home he appeared in Edinburgh, creating no end of sensation, and curiosity led me there to inquire more into the fellow. I managed to meet him and to lead up to the subject of America. He acknowledged being a New Yorker by birth, but told some tale of having lived abroad during his early childhood, etc. Of his wife, as he called her, being of Spanish extraction, and of his being almost a foreigner, not having lived in America since the death of his parents.

"Then I said, 'How was your eye injured, giving you such a strange expression?' He bristled up and seemed offended, when I said, 'No offense was meant, but your good eye is so bright and pretty.' This paved the way for more information, as flattery

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often does, and he said he received a blow that but for his wife, would have caused his death.

“My dear brother, there is no doubt in my mind but what he intends harm if he can possibly do it, and I am free to admit that it will be a relief to me to know that he has passed away, and I am in a fair way to learn if he does. Louise will not be long in bettering herself, for I tell you she is a corker, and some of the English grandees will soon come to the front and wed her.”

“Do you suppose,” said Bradley, “she would ever have the effrontery to speak of her antecedents.”

“I hardly think so; she is one to wish to stand on her own merits.”

All this conversation took place walking under the grape arbor, and about this time they were called to dinner. At least preparatory notice was given them and they went to their rooms to dress for the evening.

At dinner, Sister Mary spoke of a celebrated singer having shot at a man in self-defense in London, and it was not yet known if he would die of the wound.

Where did you get that information? was the next question.

“In to-day’s paper,” said she, whereupon Bradley scanned it carefully, and behind the paper, that no tell-tale expression should give him away to Dorothy, and they commented on how frequently such occurrences took place, and then dropped the subject for more pleasing ones.

Reinhart proceeded at once to gain every detailed account of the matter, and he was soon in communi-

cation with friends abroad, who informed him that no such thing had ever taken place in London, and then the two men conceived this to be the work of Evil-eye, that they should be thrown off his track.

There was nothing more for them to do but bide their time, with their wits duly sharpened.

Before long news reached the United States, requiring that Bradley should go abroad, and his wife could not accompany him on such short notice; therefore, his brother consented to remain and do faithful duty with them all.

He went directly to Glasgow, where his all-absorbing thought was to complete his business as expeditiously as possible. This he did in a fortnight, the last day having been spent largely in the outskirts of the city.

That evening when he returned to the hotel he was hungry, weary and dirty from the long trip. Going to his room to refresh himself, which opened upon a dark and quiet corridor, a man stepped forward and struck at him, and at once it dawned upon Bradley it was Evil-eye.

Reaching for his throat, he threw him to the ground and cried loudly for help. When they arrived the man was barely breathing, but he was resuscitated to find that Bradley's suspicions were verified and that the man was armed.

He was locked up and court proceedings began at once, as reasonable statements demonstrated a long absence from home would be most inconvenient to the traveler. Bradley's sincere wish was to have the matter conducted most quietly, without making family matters, public, and his manly appearance,

manners and frank outspokenness gained for him consideration from the jurors, so that shortly after the affair was terminated by Evil-eye being given a sentence and Bradley being footloose to return home. His prolonged absence was truthfully accounted for to his brother, who stated it was business, red tape, etc., and that was satisfying to the ladies.

One of the jurors said, "I am not the least surprised at his having acquired the name of evil-eye, for he has a veritable hangman's face, and we will take care that he gets the full requirements of the law—five years' imprisonment."

No time was lost in gaining the first homeward-bound steamer, which reached New York without anything unusual occurring, save that one of the passengers said, "This is my twentieth crossing on the Mauretania. Sometimes I have crossed just for the sea voyage, and returned without virtually leaving the vessel."

"Considering it was such a new ship, I was impressed, and asked him if it was largely attributable to his confidence in the Captain. He answered me in the affirmative and then related many acts of bravery and sound judgment on his part.

"I took them entirely by surprise at home and there was great joy in receiving me. Dorothy thought I looked careworn (nothing escapes those dear, penetrating eyes), but Reinhart came to my rescue by saying 'such business as he attended to was not of a refreshing nature.'"

Soon the delight of being with his loved ones smoothed away all the signs of care and he was relieved that the vicious man had been stored away

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for many a long day, but said, "I remember a wise proverb:

'Set not your house on fire,
To be revenged by the moon.'

After all, the man is to be pitied, for there is certainly something radically wrong with him, but why should we be the sufferers?"

CHAPTER XXX

N O ONE greeted Bradley more warmly than Albert, who kept everything of importance filed and placed upon his desk, with great pleasure to himself and appreciation on his friend's part.

Heat was intense in New York; business very dull, but still duty's post could not be abandoned. However, Albert said, one day, "I believe with this dullness you gentlemen might leave me in charge; and a telegram, if it were necessary, would soon land you here. I feel that I am capable of attending to all matters not of gravest importance. A visit twice a week from one of you for the present should steer the bark," and the gentlemen did allow themselves more latitude during the intense heat, never to regret it, for Albert was vigilance itself, and with the beginning of the new year Albert found his salary again increased.

Benvenuta was not abandoned until the sharp winds reminded them it was like sound and answering echo, seeking for sudden harmony, awakened by the power of music, which makes two souls vibrate in unison. The beautiful cheerful log fires had been thoroughly enjoyed, and even James delighted in his morning and evening trips to and from school.

But now, as the lowering clouds predicted snowfall, they must away before many a day to the bustle of a noisy city.

Reinhart and Mary had about been persuaded to remain with them until after Christmas, but much depended upon news which might reach them from home.

The last Sunday they spent in their ideal spot

was to have been alone, but on Saturday who should present himself at Bradley's office but one of his friends of earlier days, and as he said laughingly, "And returned with full saddle-bags," as is said out west, to lead a life of affluence and ease, which I think I deserve after my hard knocks."

"Well," said Bradley, "when did you reach civilization?"

"A fortnight since, and my time has been spent, as they say out west, in getting the hayseed and cockleburs off of me, and I add, done up safely to be sent back where they belong. I would not come to you until I felt you would recognize me."

"Well, I am genuinely glad to see you and you must come with me to our country home, to remain over Sunday and meet my family."

"Of what does that consist?" asked he.

"My wife and three children, two by the present wife, but Bradley, the older one, knows of no other mother; nor shall he until reason will show him there is no less love. At present my brother and sister are visiting us, and I promise you a warm welcome and the dearest of homes."

While they were talking, Bradley was thinking what a fine specimen of a man he was, and how glad he was to have him back; for their recollections of each other were of the most agreeable nature.

"Well," said Dick (his name was Richard), let us go and lunch at the Savoy, where I am stopping, and after that, old fellow, I'm sure I shall be so loath to part with you that it will end by my going anywhere just to be with you.

"Time has dealt fairly with you, Bradley, I hope.

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You look like the prosperous man I am told you are."

"I'm ahead of you, Dick, inasmuch as I have a dear family about me, who will gladden my declining years; whereas, you, old fellow, are on the selfish track," and he laughed.

"Well, you know what they say: 'One is never too old to mend their ways,' and that I hope I shall do now that I have something to offer the woman who honors me."

The lunch was jolly, Dick's amusing experiences set forth peals of laughter, while Bradley's incited feelings of envy.

When lunch was over they went to his apartments, which showed every sign of affluence, and when his suit case was packed, they took a taxi and departed. Notifying Dorothy was not necessary, for they lived in unquestioned style, and upon reaching Benvenuta, he was pleased at a glance, and impressed everyone most favorably with himself.

Mary was first seen when they met in the living room before going to dinner, and his remarks were so refined and pleasing that from the start she fancied him, and encouraged his relating his experiences with the miners, and those people so little known amongst persons of culture.

He sat at Dorothy's right *cela va sans dire*," while she occupied her habitual place at her brother's right; Reinhart having relinquished his regular place, fell to the one on Dorothy's left, and Dick said, laughingly, "Now, Brad (for of old he called him that), where is the girl you would like me to smile on? She ought to be right here," pointing to his other side.

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Dick's life had been one so free from restraint, and the two men in bygone days had been such chums, that the natural restraint of present circumstances was thrown off, and that showed Dick up in a most favorable light, and made him from the very start beloved.

Sunday was spent as usual, driving, riding, walking and enjoying the beauties of nature afforded by this magnificent place, after church had been attended in the morning.

When he was asked to go, he said, "Bless my life, I have not been in church in such an age I shall scarcely know how to behave myself. But if Miss McLaud will pilot me and be responsible for any misdemeanors on my part, I am more than agreeable." Bradley, his wife and the two went in their automobile and were repaid by a fair and reasonably long service and sermon.

Upon their return, at the entrance of Benvenuta he suggested their walking to the house through the lovely grounds, which they did, and when they arrived there was a beautiful glow upon Mary's face, seldom seen there and noted by all.

That evening Dorothy's sweet voice, accompanied by Mary's soft notes, filled the air with choice anthems, in which the men sometimes joined, while Dick sat thinking how favorably that life compared with his void one, and when the ladies and Reinhart said good-night, two warm friends sat over the cheerful fire, with their whiskey and soda, opening up to each other as but few men ever do. They thought long of each other, after they had separated, and ideas of Mary were entwined in fancy's wildest dreams.

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Monday morning took the gentlemen away rather early, after Dick's most enthusiastic expressions of enjoyment; and Mary was seen at her best, with her truly smiling face almost beaming, and making her brothers most happy.

We are told that "Great souls by instinct to each other turn, demand alliance and in friendship burn." Perhaps this may be proven the case in the present instance.

Now the flurry necessitated by their departure on Wednesday began, for even where domestics are very numerous, personal supervision is advisable; and by the appointed time they were ready to depart, leaving lonely hearts, in the way of caretakers, behind; and being greeted by cheerful ones on their city home.

Life is truly a species of gamut-running, affording sometimes pleasant music; sometimes discordant, and those who are happiest are the ones who take it as it comes, not dwelling too seriously upon it.

After the even tenor of life had been restored, the question of whether or not the family party was to be broken into by a flight into Scotland occurred; and Mary was inclined to decide on remaining in America until after Christmas, her pretext being to spend it *en famille*. But a smile played about the faces of lookers-on in Venice, and a watch for further developments was instituted.

Shortly after their return, Mr. Bruce (Dick), called, and the family were most pleased to see him; but as luck would have it, Mary was the only one not called away to fill an engagement; a fact not distasteful to him, and possibly not to her.

On this memorable occasion Dick spoke frankly of himself and family, while Mary disclosed the sad side of her life, to meet with that sympathy which is often the forerunner of love. But Mary conceived the idea that she owed a duty to her brother, and rebuffed all lover-like advances from the start. She little knew that she had encountered an indomitable will, which was dauntless in any and all undertakings and that once having been led to believe that a preference existed for him, no arguments would baffle him. Try as she might, his master strength in love for her would dominate. Along about Christmas time the family began to realize that it was a case of strength against conscience, and they hoped the former would be the victor.

Christmas, as is always the case, especially where there are little ones, was merry, and Dick seemed to enjoy every feature of it. In fact, when approached by Bradley, who thought he was in a pensive mood, and being told "A penny for your thoughts," he replied, "They are not worth it. Simply going back to the days of my extreme childhood when I still had a mother, whose pleasure it was to make my life happy; just what is being done for your bright children."

When the packages were opened there was one for everybody in the house, and Dick had not been forgotten. His was a lovely heart-shaped box, containing stud buttons and a motto, "Faint heart never won fair lady." The present was from Bradley and the sentiment was not without its significance.

Mary received a book, Rodger's Italy, the contents of which are the choicest poetry, and it delighted

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her. Much as her heart prompted her, her judgment forbade her bestowing any personal gift, and now, on that night, which was a cold, crisp one, he managed to succeed in their going off for a little stroll. She was warmly protected by softest furs, and as they walked beneath heaven's starry canopy, where the tell-tale orbs smiled down upon them, Dick poured out his tale of love in the manly state that inspires respect in every woman's heart, and her very wavering filled him with hope, and dispelled from his eyes the gloom that overshadowed them when they departed for their walk.

Mary made his courtship a trying one by constantly presenting her side of duty's demands upon her; and though he felt that his feelings were requited, he said, "It may be a case of noblesse exige. Then where am I?"

The family all showed their appreciation of him, and that she saw, but delicacy forbade the least interference on their parts, and things progressed tiresomely slow to poor Dick, who sometimes thought he was better off out in the wilds of the west, before he had known anything of conjugal love.

An uncle had been interested with him in his successful mining exploits, and had been the means of his going to New York in this way: He said to him, "Dick, we have both applied ourselves strenuously to business, with fine results. I am no longer young, but you are, and I want you to cast your lot away from here. Go east and find some noble woman to share your life and prosperity with you; that which I should have done but for being too poor and too proud to ask any woman to share my life and hardship."

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He had taken his uncle's advice and now when happiness seemed within his grasp there was such an uncertainty about it that it was veritable torture.

One evening when he had left Mary and gone to his apartments, where he sat thinking how strange it is that coveted happiness is often within our reach, yet out of our grasp. Just then a tap at the door brought him to more sober thoughts, for a telegram was handed him saying his uncle was very ill and wanted to see him.

Without any delay he called Mary to the 'phone to tell her of the news, and to say that as he must leave early the following day, he would like to see her, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. Without hesitancy, she replied, "Certainly; come at once," and as soon as a taxi could land him at their house he was there.

After laying his plans before her, she said, "And how long will you be absent?"

"That I do not know; I may never return."

The color left her face and her hands became cold, as tears welled in her beautiful eyes, when looking at him, she said, "If I accompany you, how long can you wait for that right to be bestowed upon us?"

"Mary, do you mean that, and would you for love of me, relinquish all you have here to follow me into a comfortless rough land?" Dick said, controlling his anxious feelings for his uncle. "How soon could you be ready for the blessing to be given and our departure to follow?"

Then there was a heart-to-heart talk and she concluded to call Bradley and place the matter before him. When he entered the room they held each

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others hand and there was a pleased flush upon his face. Bradley smiled, and laughingly said, "Aha! you've gone and done it, as the boys say. Well, I am delighted, but why this nocturnal announcement?"

After it was all explained to him, he said, "Mary, if you feel as you say you do, I am proud of you, for if a woman loves a man she should be willing to share any life with him, and now things must be done as expeditiously as possible, for Dick's departure must not be delayed. I will arrange for the minister to marry you at noon to-morrow, and you will leave by night train. With Dorothy's and your brother's help, you should be sent off quite creditably, my dear sister; and I must tell you now that in the whole wide world you could not have found a man more deserving of the honor you are bestowing upon him."

Shaking Dick's hand, he departed, to let them say a good-night, not to be forgotten; Mary going to her room to commence gathering her things; Dick to his to throw his, man-like, into his trunk and grip, and to regret that the hour would not admit of his whistling, even though he was lamenting his uncle's condition. "But God grant he may be spared to approve of my choice and give us his blessing."

With the dawn of day all was abustle in their home and as soon as permissible Dick was whistling as never before in his life. By noon Mary was attired in a new tailored suit and Dick in the conventional style, both looking handsome, as happiness makes the most ordinary appearing person, though each had more than their share of attraction.

No one was present at the wedding but the fam-

ily and household. After partaking of a sumptuous breakfast, the groom left the bride to complete his arrangements, giving her time to do the same with hers, and when time came for them to part, there was sorrow mixed with happiness, for Mary had taught everyone to love her, and, of course, she would be missed.

Of all of them, poor Reinhart was the only one to be pitied, for he was left alone, and his brother teasingly said, "Would not Hester fit in quite well, now?"

Reinhart remained until after New Year's and the only regret about the jolly festivities was the absence of Aunt Mary and Uncle Dick, who were thankful that Dick's uncle was still alive when they reached him, and cheerfully gave them his blessing. He lingered for some time, clear of mind, but feeble of body, and now was the time for Mary to show what a noble woman she was, in all her tenderness for him.

New Year's eve, when the bells rang the old year out and the new year in, he passed away in Dick's arms and clinging to Mary's hand, who saw to it that the light of religion shone upon him, and that he had joined her in the same prayer said by his ancestors, which shed a comforting glow of resignation over everything.

He was cremated, according to his wishes, and when all was over and the will opened, it was found that love had prompted him to remember the wife of his favorite nephew generously, and with a few lines that touched her heart. The only regret was

that he had dictated and not written them, which feebleness prevented.

Mary found that their surroundings were those prompted by refinement, and that life was less crude than expected. The people were plain, but well meaning and felt they had lost a good friend in the recent death, but were ready to render Dick any assistance in facilitating the winding up of matters, that they might away to more congenial climes.

Dick was blissfully happy, when he did not think of his old uncle, of whom he was so fond, and Mary was satisfied she had made no mistake. Her time was filled in bringing sunshine into the lives of those about her, while Dick was closing out matters with as little loss as possible, but with a decision indicating he was not of a vacillating nature; nor one willing to demand great sacrifices of the dear woman, who thought nothing too hard to do for him.

Their Christmas had been a bright one in New York, but Mary had done cheering things about the ill man's bed, dispelling all the gloom she could, and New Year's morning she read the Christmas carols—never too late—and some of them she sang, her sweet voice causing tears to flow from the old man's eyes, and from the husband's a glow of happiness and gratitude for what she was to them both.

When they would be able to leave that country and depart for home was most uncertain, but Mary could see plainly that Dick was exerting his utmost not to lengthen her torture and absence from home, dear ones and accustomed comforts, so that she was the dearest of wives to this fondest of husbands, and

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even in this plain style of living they found they were all in all to each other.

Shakespeare said, "The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily untie."

Theirs were lives of sound judgment and good cheer. Letters from home were received with great joy, and theirs were no less welcome. Mary wrote begging Reinhart not to cross the water without seeing her again; if not in New York, in their far-away western home, and when he grew restless it was a question as to which way to turn his face.

Much to their regret, it was a late spring, continued ice and snow keeping them house-bound, though longing each day the more for beautiful Benvenuta. The first green leaf, a merry chirp of the birds, sent delight to their hearts and made their calculations start anew with throbbing anticipations.

Matters progressed nicely with the western branch of the family, and one day Dick said, "After all, my dear, success is to get as much out of life as one can, don't you think so? And this we must do for ourselves and those about us."

About the time that dear Dorothy, the true wife and loving mother, was arranging to close their city house, Mary and Dick were gladdening the hearts of those about them by distributing all their household effects among the miners and working people of their camp; such riches as they never expected to own, though most simple in the eyes of Dick and Mary, brought a thrill of long-to-be-remembered happiness, and when they departed many a dejected face followed them till out of sight.

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Reaching New York in the lovely month of May, Mary found her brother's house closed; they had all gone to flourishing Benvenuta. So they settled in a handsome suite in the Savoy, where he had been before he was married, and enjoyed life until the heat became very great, and they were urged to go to the country.

Reaching Benvenuta on one oppressive evening, they found all seated on the lovely lawn, in cool summer gowns, without any idea of personal experience of what was being endured in the city; and soon they were casting votes of thanks for what they were escaping.

CHAPTER XXXI

REINHART had fled from the country, feeling his sister's marriage had made another void in his life, more to be appreciated in an atmosphere which reminded him constantly of his own mistake; and a longing overcame him to see Hester, the only woman for whom he had ever any romantic sentiment. Perhaps they might feel that life would be more complete were they united. This he confided to his brother before departing and they all hoped she might add another member to the family.

Mary regretted not meeting him, at the same time hoped it would prove for the best. Dick and she were truly happy in this ideal spot with those loved children about them, but they sometimes expressed a fear that Dorothy was not as strong as all would like her to be; but fearing to distress Bradley, the subject was not discussed, though she was watched with loving care and tenderness. Sometimes it seemed that her devoted husband feared, but would not admit to himself.

Shortly after Reinhart reached Scotland he learned from his letters that Hester had entered a religious order, where she was making her ability and strength of character felt by the good work she was doing. He had gone to see her and been received as a friend, no one knowing anything of their past history, and the peaceful contented look which shone from her eyes was proof sufficient that God's work had been done with her, and at least in her heart there was no tinge of regret.

They parted, she giving him a small religious

memento, which he promised to wear; he going forth on a more solitary mission than ever.

His next step—anything to take him out of himself—was to make inquiries about Evil-eye and to learn with great relief that he had been shot unto death while trying to make his escape from prison. This was news which he lost no time in dispatching to his brother.

The family occupying the old home kept it in such order, at least on the exterior, that feelings of regret were spared him, but a wish came to his heart that Mary might long for the association of her youth and induce Richard to return to that hallowed spot, where again they would live in peace and happiness in the shadow of bygone days, so replete with all that was good and noble.

Ofttimes Mary, too, had the wish to see her old home, and seated on the green sod at the entrance to their beautiful vault, the last resting place of her dear ones, commune with her own thoughts, while loving the songsters who afforded such constant and sweet music to those seeking the spot as the one calculated to inspire good intentions and fit one to soar high when called to join their beloved.

As autumn days approached and the feeling came over her that they must be shielded from the blasts of winter, she and Dick discussed their future plans without reaching any final decision about them for quite a while.

Mourning for their uncle would bar them from social intercourse, and they conjectured that the family would be loath to part with them; therefore, they suppressed their wish to go back to Scotland, and

when the lease of their property had expired, to return, all three of them, to the family domain, and live there as their ancestors had done before them.

Albert had attracted the attention of Dick and he expressed a desire to adopt him, which was discussed with Bradley, who loved the young fellow, as well as his own, but realized that such a step would further Albert's worldly success, advancing him more rapidly, while making life far easier for him than in the treadmill procedures of New York business men; so that it was talked over with him, but Dick's kind offer declined by reason of his fondness for Bradley, and he remarked, "I have learned that attachment means far more to me than money, and while I deeply appreciate the offer, I must decline to accept it, if I am giving entire satisfaction where I am."

Naturally, this decision endeared him the more to both men, and Dick felt that from his well-filled coffers he could afford to make him a generous present, when he would be leaving the country, as he knew he ultimately would do. Bradley gave Albert's hands a very warm grip when the interview was over, but his appreciative heart was too full for utterance, and in his mind he resolved to give him the standing of an own son.

Not so long thereafter, Reinhart wrote that he had seen Louise and that she was one of the grandest specimens of women that could be fancied. The whole tone of his letter was indicative of veritable infatuation, which caused his brother and sister great concern, lest he should take a rash step; therefore, very suddenly Mary and Dick embarked to join him,

never letting him know that they had received the news, and soon after reaching the other side he extended them an invitation to attend the opera in a box.

They accepted without saying anything that would convey the idea that they were suspicious. It was a magnificent full house, the elite of Glasgow were present and she, known as Mademoiselle Camille, was radiantly beautiful, with a voice that kept everyone spellbound, and staggered them with astonishment, both on her account and the rapturous state of Reinhart's state of mind and feelings. Her costumes and magnificent jewels bespoke great popularity and she was fairly showered with bouquets of rarest, most beautiful flowers, Reinhart's, no doubt, being amongst them.

Going to the hotel where they were stopping from the play, Reinhart awoke within their breasts feelings of keenest anxiety; though they toyed with the subject of his infatuation as a fish does with the fly upon the rod, and their appreciation of her merits as a singer was as it should have been with anyone known only to them as a highly cultivated bird. They enthused only enough not to be suspected.

During the following day Dick ascertained that she was creating a great furore amongst the noblest of the land and that the idea was conceived that as soon as she was well married it would be found that the bird had flown to a more substantial and less wearying nest.

Reinhart was blissfully happy and known to be much in her society. Mary undertook upon one occasion, with all the delicacy possible, to talk with him

upon the subject, to learn that he ranked himself among her greatest admirers, and hoped in time to bring her into his life as his wife. This crushed Mary so that it was long before she could collect herself and tell him that they had come over to open the dear old home for all three of them, and embark in a life that no doubt would give him a true, noble wife of whom they should always be proud, instead of ever anxious; fearing the same return to life, which had become stronger than herself, as was the case with Hortense, or Mademoiselle Felice.

“Think well, my dear brother, of the risk you are taking, and of the unhappiness you will cause us all. I, for one, will return to America, and Scotland will never see me again; but Bradley and I will never consent to her occupying the home of our sainted mother. I blush to think that a woman of her stamp should ingratiate herself into your favor.”

“Now, Mary,” said Reinhart, “go no further, for you are wronging the woman. Her first step was a false one when that villain Charles deceived her, and then necessity drove her to the stage, where she has not had an easy life, but always kept him well provided with money and her character has not been assailed. It has given her a standing with men of note, and if I do not carry off the trophy, I know a man of standing who will.”

“Should you succeed in this frenzied undertaking of yours, you will cut yourself aloof from your brother and myself, and if this be your contemplation, I beg you to give me time to be out of the country before disgrace reaches us. In a week from now Dick and I will have looked into matters concerning

us, and then if you will ally yourself with her, let us know, and we will leave not for a short time but forever. Alliance with a person of that type will separate you from all of your own, and when she shall have secured your money you will be left an old, broken and lonely man; for that is the attraction with her, my poor brother. You are not the type of man to inspire true love in a woman of loose ideas, and you say with high and mighty suitors before her. No, no, I implore you not to take the step."

He angered, as any man would under similar circumstances, and then left her in a frenzied state of mind.

She and her husband went about attending to business and at the expiration of a week, were shocked to learn that he had left the country with her for Paris, on his mad flight. They could learn of no marriage, and hoped he had not given her a name, highly honored since time immemorial.

Whether to remain for the winter as intended or not, was what was then troubling them. Bradley's advice was to do so, as their presence would afford him time for reflection, and perhaps more rational behavior.

Weeks passed by and no news came of him. Finally it was ascertained he had made her his wife and selected Paris as their place of abode. The brother and sister resolved to let him pass out of their lives and with this decision came the one to select a home in New York for themselves, where the united members of the family could reside in peace and happiness.

Shortly thereafter they took the Lusitania for

New York, and encountered so terrific a storm that the vessel and passengers were almost lost, and they reached the city in such a state, that they were towed in, presenting the sorriest sight, and neither of them cared to refer to their experiences or to take another voyage.

They went to the Savoy, their former stopping place, and soon were at Bradley's home with a world of news, amusing as well as distressing, to tell. It was Sunday noon when they dropped in upon them and there was great surprise, as the anticipated trip had not been written of; and great was the merry-making over the return of the loved ones, from both old and young. Their joy was great but the one thing prevented the existence of supreme happiness.

Who was it said "Thought is deeper than all speech; feeling deeper than all thought?" So it was with Mary, who saw that Dorothy was failing, and yet she must not let her brother know that she had noticed it. Bradley, too, was showing signs of care and responsibility. His brother's conduct was mortifying, but his wife's condition was heartrending; a gradual failing without any pronounced traceable cause. She was more beautiful than ever with her ethereal look, and her lovely children constantly about her, for she was the fondest of mothers, and made the sweetest of pictures.

Little Bradley seemed to cling to her even more than her own; the dear boy who never had been told, and when his father was not about it was his pleasure to consider her every want, remain constantly with her, entertaining her with his boyish pranks, etc. His love for her could never be doubted.

Louise's name by this time was overshadowed by that of Mrs. Reinhart McLaud, but she was running the gauntlet and stimulating the pride of the man many years her senior, by her acknowledged beauty and charm, gaining admiration at every step; thereby making him oblivious of everything but his own happiness. How long this would last was a question asked by many, and time alone could answer it.

Something of importance arose and it was thought that Albert, although still young, would prove himself equal to the requirements, so that he was sent abroad to attend to the matter. It was his first visit and everything was alluring to him but his was a steady character, not to be swerved from the right path; and after securing the desired information, and following out instructions given him, he went to Paris for a few days, where he met Reinhart, of whom he knew nothing disparaging, and learning of his marriage was greatly surprised.

Taken to his magnificent home to meet his beautiful wife, who certainly charmed the boy with her grace and loveliness, but his farseeing eyes prompted him to believe all was not right, and when offered the hospitality of their home he declined it, upon the ground that his time was most limited.

When he left their grand home he asked himself why he had never heard of the marriage or the present home. It seemed queer and he congratulated himself upon having declined the invitation and being again upon his own resources.

He had but two more days in Paris which he put to profitable use, but being very handsome, more

than one snare was offered him, and if temptations existed they were shunned, sending him back home with only creditable statements to make and no feeling of remorse.

After all points had been discussed most satisfactorily, Albert spoke of his Paris experiences, and expressed surprise at not having heard of the marriage, etc., etc. Then he spoke of the affluence in which they lived, of his beautiful wife, whom he called "darling," and when asked why he refused the proffered hospitality, he replied, "Frankly, I cannot say why; only my intuition guided me and I have not regretted it." The gentlemen proffered no information, but said he had acted very wisely and expressed their entire satisfaction over his report.

When Albert was alone he said to himself, "All is not right, but my position requires silence now and at all times upon the subject."

Not long after Bradley took Albert for a drive and told him that perfect confidence in his discretion prevented his fearing to remove the feeling that must exist within him as to the secrecy of his brother's marriage, and to say that he was more than glad he had not remained in their home: "But, frankly, my boy, why was it?"

"I could not for the life of me explain why. Now, I think it was my father's ever guiding hand saved me from incurring your displeasure, which would certainly make me very unhappy. Mr. McLaud, I am sufficiently thoughtful to realize that friends are the greatest boons a person can possess, especially when not independent of the world, as I am."

As much as could be told so young and inexpe-

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rienced a person to account for the lack of interest between the brothers, was told him and he was glad to be able to understand the situation.

Returning home after the drive Albert was taken to his house to dine, where everyone was glad to see him and they spent a pleasant evening; but Albert was sorry to have to admit to himself that Bradley's wife seemed to be fading away, like the sweetest and dearest of flowers. "What a pang this will be to my best of friends!"

Many New Yorkers upon returning from abroad expatiated upon the beauty and charm of Reinhart's wife, whom he sought every opportunity to make known to them; but they soon realized an estrangement existed, and they were not slow in inquiring into the cause of it, and ever after she was not discussed, thus saving them considerable embarrassment.

Time went on and it was not long before the love of notoriety was beginning to assert itself. A beautiful home, the greatest affluence, and every heart's desire gratified did not suffice for one who had lived upon excitement, and soon Louise was again before the footlights, charming everyone with her magnificent, almost unheard of, voice; and exercising such an influence over Reinhart that he tramped about with her, filling her engagements for a long time, but finally disgust overcame him, and he left for parts unknown leaving her to follow to the end the life fraught with delusions; while his was wrecked by drink, and before any of his loved ones could reach him he wandered aimlessly through very remote countries, carefully guarding his identity, and was

looked upon as a man of broken spirit, about whom the mantle of life closed, leaving another record of a man's sad ending, brought about by a woman devoid of noblest instincts concentrated in love.

A few lines were found upon his person addressed to his brother and sister giving instructions about his being laid away in the family vault in Scotland;—nothing more, and loving hearts were left behind to mourn his loss, but to give no credence to the report that Louise was overcome with grief over the effect produced by her behavior with a man such as she had never before known.

This added greatly to the trials of the family, who were much attached to him in spite of his peculiarities—especially Mary, who had striven so hard to prevent his taking the foolish step, remembering, no doubt, that we are told that “One false step to hell's perdition leads;” and in this all realize there is much truth.

Of course, they anticipated a call upon them for her share of the estate, but when they were satisfied beyond a doubt he had made her his wife, they waited for no commotion to be created, simply sending her what she was entitled to by law, and that they hoped would end all communication. Their greatest wish was never in any way to be brought in contact with her.

For a while she seemed to have retired from before the footlights, but when newspaper articles came out voting for the world's most noted voice, it was too much for her and coming forward she fell in line, and without the least effort was awarded the palm

for possession of a voice in which nothing was wanting, as it was simply perfection.

A certain appreciation of gentility prompted her not to relate private family matters to the world, and soon the few who surmised something of actual facts forgot everything, but that she was Mademoiselle Camille, the World's Bird Wonder.

As age came upon her, and the powers of her charms lessened, some of the finer instincts of her nature assumed supremacy, and she determined that little Bradley should become sole heir to his uncle's possessions of every nature whatsoever at her demise, and proceeded to have the required papers framed before there should be any question as to her lunacy, or otherwise. Of course, this was not to be known of during her lifetime, but with one of so noted and public a character it was hard to preserve the desired secrecy and with greatest calmness—yea, even happiness—she sought entire seclusion, where she might sink into oblivion and the candle of her life be extinguished by the breath of deepest remorse—one might say.

Ere she had passed away, as afterwards learned, the family were made to realize that even beneath the vanity and heartlessness of her nature a good streak was dormant, and they hoped its light would show her into another and better world. Mary said one day, "As Camille had her strong points of goodness, let us hope that Florice, the danceuse had hers, and that while they spoiled the happiness of more lives than one before the darkness of night folded itself about them, the assurance of God's mercy had given them solace."

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Many questions had been asked concerning her place of retreat, but without satisfactory results, until relief came to them by virtue of her orders, that she had passed away with hope that as she had atoned for all her wrong doings forgiveness might be cherished in the hearts of those whom she had wronged. Needless to say that even though Christianity prompted them to crave for mercy with the poor woman, no greater relief could have been afforded them, and now Mary and her husband could feel that they might return to their home in Scotland and see the last resting place of all her dear ones—most tearfully that of the noble brother who had wrecked his own life by means of lending too ready an ear to the whisperings of flattery and a non-realization of his own idiosyncrasies.

CHAPTER XXXII

BEFORE departing they would visit the family at Benvenuta, where all was peace and sunshine save for dear Dorothy's declining health.

But, my friends and readers, while it is the custom of many novel writers to give the hero or heroine of their book either a tragic or remarkable ending of some kind—perhaps springing from a window to save a loved one from a house in flames; or to throttle a rival; if not to nurse or care for one with whom the ravages of tuberculosis have told their sad tale; all this being portrayed in such a realistic way as to cause a reader to close a book having tear-stained cheeks—my wish is to make you remember this book with delight afforded by the thought that the candle of life can be extinguished in an atmosphere of the perfume of sweet roses, with peace and contentment such as a well spent life offers as its reward.

This we are going to find the case with Dorothy, in her comparative youth, with everything to live for, and so much to offer others, as she finds that her end is approaching, and summoning all the loved ones about her, bids them a peaceful farewell, with the request that they mourn not, but strive to lead such lives as in time would bring them to her. And while the birds are singing sweetly, the honeysuckle vines creeping about her windows, filling the air with delicious perfume and twilight is shedding its softest rays everywhere, she passes away in the arms of her tenderest of husbands, her little ones being as ministering angels to waft her soul on high from her beloved home, Benvenuta, to God's choicest realms in the Kingdom of Heaven.

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Thus is drawn about a noble character, the mantle of a cruel fate, which has emblazoned upon its folds, "God's elect are those most sorely tried."

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